DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 420 424 PS 026 597

AUTHOR	Phillippi, Klotylda
TITLE	Mandating a Constructivist Approach to Early Elementary Literacy Instruction: The Intended and Unintended Consequences in One School District.
PUB DATE	1998-04-15
NOTE	45p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (San Diego, CA, April 15, 1998).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research (143) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Constructivism (Learning); Educational Change; *Educational Policy; Educational Practices; *Literacy Education; *Primary Education; Reading Skills; *Teacher Attitudes; Teaching Methods
IDENTIFIERS	Barriers to Implementation

ABSTRACT

In 1988, a school district implemented a reform which was promoted as originating both in research and in the practice of teaching. The reform policy was designed to improve the teaching of young children by mandating a constructivist, child-centered, and developmentally appropriate approach. Since the philosophy and practices mandated in the policy were already in place with some teachers, and because the policy was developed by a committee of respected local educators, it was seen as a grass-roots effort based in the practice of teaching. This qualitative study examines the effectiveness of these educational reforms, particularly the demands that administrative policy made on teaching practice. Data were collected over a 2-year period by means of interviews with 4 central office administrators, 2 school board members, 8 elementary school principals, 6 learning specialists and 17 teachers. The analysis focused specifically on early literacy instruction. While there was a sense among some of the staff of increased professionalism, a decrease in the practice of tracked ability grouping for reading, and a reported improvement in the classroom atmosphere, there was also the unintended consequence of resistance by some of the teachers to implementing the policy. Many teachers were not convinced that the teaching practices mandated would improve student learning. These consequences resulted from a mix of an underestimation of the demands the policy would make on practice, the difficulty involved in moving from a transmission model of teaching and learning to a constructivist approach, the inability of the district to provide for teaching learning, and unexamined questions of the power of others to decide the best approach to teaching. Contains 68 references. (JPB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 420 424

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

- Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Mandating a constructivist approach to early elementary literacy instruction - the intended and unintended consequences in one school district

Klotylda Phillippi
Plymouth-Canton Community Schools
and
University of Michigan

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Klotylda Phillippi
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

Paper presented at the symposium, "Teachers Mediating Reform," at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, April 15, 1998, San Diego, California

> I think more attentiveness to research has been one of the driving forces behind this policy. The criticisms that we've heard from outside education - business and industry, for example, say that we don't pay attention to the research - to what's going on in our field. We just wait by the tracks for a train to come along with an answer to our problem and then we jump on and ride that for awhile and then ride something else. The implication is that the research gives us some systematic way - some foundation for looking at things. I think we're becoming more attentive to that. (Interview transcription, 10/25/90, p. 8)

> The State Superintendent of Public Instruction and the California Department of Education, the California State Board of Education, and the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing have collaborated to develop this program advisory on early reading instruction. We believe that this advisory will provide the policy direction and instructional guidance needed to support the improvement of reading achievement in California.
>
> All parties involved in developing the advisory believe that the uncommon consensus achieved around this document should send a powerful message to all stakeholders involved in education in California that a change of course in the teaching of reading has occurred. While many districts have pioneered a change of course along the lines suggested here, not all have done so systematically. With this document we hope to ensure that all districts change their course to comply with the suggestions contained in this publication.
>
> (California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 1996, p. v)

At various times in the history of American education, generally when student achievement seems to have fallen below acceptable levels, policy makers, much like in the two quotes above, have pointed to research in support of their efforts to reform the practice of teaching. The "research-says" argument is used to support particular practices which are purported to enhance student learning. As Mary Kennedy wrote in the *Educational Researcher* (1997)

> There is quite a bit of research, for instance, that has contributed to the current reform movement advocating conceptual or constructivist approaches to teaching, and much of it suggests that the approaches to teaching advocated by reformers might actually benefit students more than traditional teaching strategies do. But how can such research persuade teachers to do things differently ...? (p. 6)

Policy makers, then, often ask: How can we make research available to those who might benefit most - teachers and administrators?

On the other hand, Richard Elmore and Milbrey McLaughlin, who have studied the relationship between educational policy and the practice of teaching so that we might learn from attempts to reform schools with policy, admonish that reforms cannot simply be an imposition based on expert advice. They wrote:

> In brief, our argument is that reform of the basic conditions of teaching and learning in schools requires "steady work" of a different sort than has characterized educational reforms of the past. In some sense, these reforms

> must originate in the practice of teaching rather than in expert advice and external standards as have past reforms (1988, p. 4, emphasis added).

In the fall of 1988, the Chadwick School District[1] implemented a reform which was promoted as originating both in research and in the practice of teaching. It was designed to improve the teaching of young children by mandating a constructivist, child-centered, and developmentally appropriate approach. Since the philosophy and practices mandated in the policy were already in place with some of the teachers, and because the policy was developed by a committee of highly respected local educators, it was seen as a grass-roots effort based in the practice of teaching. However, it was also "based on sound principles of child development" which reflect "knowledge of how young children best learn" (Program Improvement Plan, 1988).

The policy was a mandate that teachers in kindergarten, first and second grades employ developmentally appropriate practices (DAP) in their teaching. It was wide-ranging - designed to change the teaching of all subjects; however, for this paper, I focus specifically on early literacy instruction. Although the policy reflected the "latest" research on literacy, Rebecca Barr (1984) has reminded us that debates about how children should be taught to read have been evident throughout the history of American education. In addition, the problem of how to best teach slow progress and disabled readers and writers has been a major preoccupation of reading researchers. Much of the controversy has been more recently investigated and summarized by Marilyn Jaggar Adams in her book, *Beginning to Read: Thinking and Learning about Print* (1990), in which she recognized the extent to which the debate has become politicized. She viewed two sides opposing each other on the basis of the purpose of reading. On one side are those who feel that comprehension only should be emphasized from the start and on the other side are those who believe that developing the skills to recognize words are the basic prerequisite.

The Chadwick School District's DAP policy reflected the former stance, a "whole language" approach, which was presented as "a natural process that occurs when children are immersed in a literate environment..." where they "learn to write and read in the same natural way they learned to speak" (Chadwick, First Grade Curriculum Guide, 1989, p. 39). It was based very specifically on the National Association for the Education of Young Children's (NAEYC) position statement on developmentally appropriate practices which provided general guidelines in addition to specifically naming both "appropriate" and "inappropriate" practices in regard to early reading and writing. It was an effort to mandate the kind of constructivist approach pointed to in Mary Kennedy's quote. The policy was written with the best intentions for teacher professionalism and with the loftiest goals for student learning. It was meant to empower teachers to be professional and to require them to make informed decisions in their classrooms.

However, while there was a sense among some of the staff of increased professionalism, a decrease in the practice of tracked ability grouping for reading, and a reported improvement in the classroom atmosphere, there was also the unintended consequence of resistance by some of the teachers to implementing the policy. Furthermore, many teachers were not convinced the the teaching practices mandated would, indeed, improve student learning. These consequences were a result of a complex mix of an underestimation of the demands the policy would make on practice, the difficulty involved in moving from a transmission model of teaching and learning to a constructivist approach, the inability of the district to provide for teaching learning, and unexamined questions of the power of others to decide the best approach to teaching.

---

[1] The name of the school district, individual schools, names of people, and newspapers are pseudonyms.

The Research

The research design for my study was qualitative, based in part upon an ethnographic model. Data were collected over a two-year period by tape-recorded interviews with participants who responded to my letter of invitation to discuss personal experiences with the DAP policy. I interviewed four central office administrators, two school board members, eight elementary principals, six learning specialists and seventeen teachers. Second interviews were held with six teacher participants after they had experienced a second year involved with the policy. I also kept a personal journal which I tape-recorded as I drove to and from school. All tapes were transcribed and analyzed. I read official and public documents about the policy available in the school district. These included curricular and support materials, School Board minutes, and local newspaper accounts. I attended School Board meetings and took extensive field notes. I took field notes at grade level meetings, district curriculum meetings, and school staff meetings. Other data consisted of historical accounts of the school district found in a published history of the district written by a local historian, School Board minutes from the years preceding the policy, and from various documents included with staff development opportunities in the district.

All research and analysis were conducted by me; however, after I had transcribed the tapes from the first round of interviews and analyzed them for patterns, I met with interested teacher participants for second interviews at which time I presented emerging patterns and asked for feedback and further reflection.

I hoped that a close look at this policy might shed some light on what happens when a district attempts to improve the quality of teaching and learning. In particular, I wanted to examine the demands that the policy made on practice as David Cohen admonished. Cohen said that the "inherited language of discourse about policy" has obscured some vital issues:

> One is that every instructional reform contains an implied program for practice, and makes some bets about the resources required to reform practice. Yet few analysts have premised studies of implementation on analyses of the demands that reform made on practice. Few have carefully addressed the resources that are available in practice to support those reforms. Few have tried to figure out what teachers actually did with academic work as they "implemented" a reform of instruction. And fewer still have tried to understand what explains differences among teachers' management of instructional reform. (1987, p. 169)

I was further challenged by Wimpleberg and Boyd (1988) when they suggested: "To date we have little research to draw from that inquires into the classroom teachers' perceptions of their teaching options as they are either amplified or constrained by district-level policies" (p. 5).

The Context

The DAP policy cannot be understood without a brief look at the local, state and national contexts within which it occurred because these nested influences played a significant role in the ways the policy was received by the educators and by the public. From the time the Chadwick Community School district began as a series of one-room schools in the late 1820s, it has prided itself as a state, and sometimes national, leader in the advancement of educational opportunities for students and in the professional qualities of its staff. The innovative programs which have been its hallmark have frequently resulted from the immense efforts of individuals or groups with a vision of what might be done to enhance the learning of Chadwick students. The DAP policy is one of those innovative programs.

The policy makers

Almost all of the principals and teachers interviewed believed that the DAP policy was the vision of Hazel Brown, then Director of Elementary Education and long-time advocate for child-centered teaching practices. Previously a local university lab school director, she had been hired in 1971 to open Hunter Woods, a school which began with a reputation for innovation and child-centered teaching. One principal said that she felt that, in her role as a district administrator, Mrs. Brown "has been forced to implement other procedures that she didn't particularly agree with." However, the DAP policy presented an opportunity for her own philosophy. The principal continued:

> I think that when she realized that the research was supporting her own feelings about how kids should be taught that she vigorously pursued it and she had around her, as she usually does, a cadre of people who felt similarly and she just made the move. (Interview transcript, 10/18/90, p. 1)

The other major player in the creation of the DAP policy was Dr. Jordon, the superintendent. He had moved away from the building-level and local-input decision making approach which had characterized early superintendencies and had instituted a hierarchical chain of command to insure the flow of information and responsibilities within the district. His strong points have been described as his business sense and his ability to organize planning for the future. A mathematician, he had also been credited with piloting the district through some very difficult economic times (Hudson, 1986). Dr. Jordon maintained an organization of administrators using direct lines of responsibility. His support of the policy was drawn largely from its research base. He said, "I think we tried to analyze research and it all pointed in that direction" (10/9/90, p. 3).

The paradigm shift

The DAP policy mandated practices which were very different from those previously expected from district teachers. So different, in fact, that to prepare for the implementation, teachers watched a video about how a paradigm shift occurs. The shift they were to make was from a transmission model of teaching to a constructivist approach. The significance of this shift is understood best in light of the history of curriculum and teaching practices in the years just before the policy.

Chadwick's student population had increased dramatically between 1960 and 1976. The elementary schools which were built during this period had each developed and maintained a separate curriculum and approach to teaching. This had been the philosophy of the previous superintendent, but it did not fit well with Dr. Jordon's "Strategic Planning Document." Therefore, in 1977, instructional leaders were hired at the Central Office to "develop, implement and evaluate instructional programs for all grade levels in the system" (Hudson, 1986, p. 153). Three administrators were added to the Central Administration staff - an assistant superintendent for instruction and directors for elementary and secondary curriculum. The plan was to make the instructional methods and materials more aligned across the district. Hazel Brown eventually became the Director of Elementary Education and she brought her child-centered philosophy with her to her new position.

During this time of district population growth and frequent student reassignment from one school to another, the Central Office administrators and

School Board members received many complaints from parents about the variety of instructional materials and approaches. Many parents felt that the children had a difficult time adjusting to the reassignments primarily because the schools used different texts and held different goals and expectations for the students. As a result, the Chadwick committees of teachers and principals created district-wide content goals for each curricular area and selected basic text books for each subject. The general method of curriculum committee work, however, was to gather the latest editions of various publishers' texts, decide on one to be used district-wide and then align district "goals" with the content of the text.

The reading series, which was adopted for use by every elementary school in the district, included student copies of readers arranged by grade levels from "readiness" to fifth grade and above, student workbooks, teacher guidebooks or manuals, supplemental materials such as skill practice sheets for phonics and comprehension, instructional charts with word lists, and testing materials. "Readiness" workbooks, used in kindergarten, were to help students learn to identify letters of the alphabet, understand letter and sound associations, sequence visually from left to right, and memorize the "basic sight words" which would be needed for the pre-primer, or first reading book in the publisher's series. The text book mandate also included, in the case of reading, the administration of end-of-level and end-of-book tests supplied by the publisher. The answers were recorded on "scantron" cards and sent to the Board of Education office to be machine scored and recorded. Students who did not successfully pass the tests or any sections of the tests were to be retaught the skills they failed and were not to advance to the next book in the basal series without passing the book test.

The Board of Education was adamant that each student in the district have a text book to use for each content area and teachers were very strongly encouraged to use those texts as the basis of her or his instruction. It was not without foundation that some teachers believed that the administration required that they follow the text books precisely: "...you had a book and it was mandated from the top and you do it and you feel as if you're not doing a good job if you don't get through the whole book" (6/18/91, p. 12).

The district also attempted to standardize instruction. In 1981, Chadwick implemented a program of Essential Elements of Effective Instruction, (EEEI, or often referred to as Instructional Skills) and by the mid-1980s all instructional personnel were required to participate in three series of EEEI training. Based on the work of Madeline Hunter, EEEI was the district's effort to put research into practice in every classroom. Teachers were to plan lessons using the "seven-step lesson design" with careful attention to breaking concepts into component parts to be appropriately sequenced for teaching and learning. Principals were trained in "Clinical Supervision of Instruction" so that they could evaluate teachers on EEEI when they observed in classrooms. The "appropriate practice" within the district at this time was direct instruction:

> Direct instruction refers to academically focused, teacher-directed classrooms using sequenced and structured materials. It refers to teaching activities where goals are clear to students, time allocated for instruction is sufficient and continuous, coverage of content is extensive, the performance of students is monitored, questions are at an appropriate cognitive level so that students can produce many correct responses, and feedback to students is immediate and academically oriented. In direct instruction, the teacher controls instructional goals, chooses materials appropriate for the student's ability....interaction is characterized as structured but not authoritarian. (Materials presented during Chadwick Instructional Skills Training, May, 1983, p. 4)

Responding to national reports

At about the same time the district was requiring textbook-driven, direct instruction practices, *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) was published, and the Chadwick district responded with more stringent graduation requirements. This response fit typical Wave I response to these reforms (Odden, 1991), but seemed unnecessary given the Superintendent's glowing report about student achievement at the time. The tightening down on academic emphasis continued, however, and in 1984 a decision was made to do away with the "middle school concept" and replace it with a philosophy more centered on academics. The district was clearly heeding the recommendations outlined in *A Nation at Risk* even though, by all accounts, the Chadwick students were already exceeding the academic goals suggested in the report. Between 1983 and 1985, across the U.S., according to Mary Hatwood Futrell (1990), more than seven hundred statutes were enacted by legislatures "stipulating what should be taught, when it should be taught, and by whom it should be taught." She said, "The clear purpose of this mass of legislation and bureaucratic mandates that followed was to control and to regulate teachers and local schools" (p. 11). Meanwhile, the reports from the Carnegie Task Force (1986) and the Holmes Group (1986) called for the professionalization of teaching and for empowering teachers to make more decisions which directly affect them and their students, but as Futrell noted, "the legacy of the first wave endured - emphasis on education as a utilitarian rather than an intrinsic value" (p. 12).

State's new definition of reading

It was also during the early 1980s that the state began a process to create a "definition of reading." The previous definition was inferred from the curriculum and from the state mandated reading test which tested individual objectives. The new definition began with a review of reading objectives by the Department of Education and the state Reading Association during 1982-83. The review determined that "The definition of reading implied by the objectives did not adequately reflect current theory and research;" therefore, the process was started to create a definition of reading. The new definition focused on "how the reader builds meaning from print; what the reader brings to the situation in terms of experience, knowledge, skills, and motivation; how the information is presented in written text; and what effects context has on reading" (Wixson et al., 1987, p. 750).

This definition was considered radically different from the former implied definition which focused entirely on a sequence of skills with no mention of what the reader brings in terms of experience and attitude or what difficulties might be presented in the text itself.

After a state-wide meeting to inform districts about the new definition, Mrs. Brown set up a Reading Task Force across grade levels for the Chadwick district. This Task Force planned a series of ten-week seminars conducted by prominent literacy researchers which provided attendees with opportunities for debate and clarification. The state funding for this staff development allowed them to re-construct the new definition on their own.

During the mid- to late-1980s, largely as a result of the state's new definition of reading and participation in the seminars, some teachers were moving away from textbook-dominated instruction, including reliance on basal readers. New Reading Guides for the district had been created by the members of the Reading Task Force and Hazel Brown consistently said that the district's curriculum "was in place" (referring to the curriculum objectives and topics for each grade level created by volunteer teams of teachers) which implied that as long as teachers taught "the curriculum" they could decide on the instructional method themselves.

Begindergarten

There were many children who did not seem to be successful in the academic, workbook-oriented classrooms which had come to be favored by district policy in the early 1980s. Their reading achievement and overall school performance was lower than classmates. As a result, in the fall of 1984, the district began a new elementary program called Begindergarten described as an addition to the traditional kindergarten and designed to serve five-year-olds "who may have superior intelligence but not be mature enough to cope with the stresses of the school day" (Hudson, 1986, p. 173). The elementary school curriculum had been becoming more and more "academic" with a push downward through the grades. In other words, what had been taught in second grade, was now taught in first grade and the first grade concepts were taught in kindergarten (Hatch and Freeman, 1988). The program was designed to reduce school failure and retention by identifying children who appeared 'at risk' and placing them with specially certified early childhood teachers in classrooms designed to meet their needs. All incoming kindergartners were initially screened by trained observers as the children visited prearranged sessions in the schools. Those children who got low ratings on a district-created checklist were recommended for an individual screening using the Gesell School Readiness Test (Ilg, [1965], 1982).

No text books or workbooks were used by Begindergarten teachers. Manipulatives were used for mathematics instruction and literature books of all kinds were the basis of language arts. While there wasn't an attempt to have students memorize the names of the letters or learn letter/sound associations, the teachers immersed the children in reading and writing activities which enabled them to build those understandings. In place of "reading readiness workbooks" and texts designed to teach children to read, chants and rhymes and rhythms and the child's own language formed the foundation of the literacy instruction. The teachers understood that the students bring with them to school a rich knowledge of how reading and writing work and generally attempted to build upon this knowledge.

Whole Language support group

Some of the Chadwick teachers came together informally, after school, in a whole language support group in the mid-1980s. The teachers who began the group had attended the district staff development sessions on the new definition of reading and wanted to continue their discussions and to support each other in their efforts to move away from the textbooks. They joined the whole language "movement" and eight of them attended the first Whole Language Umbrella Conference in St. Louis and have been part of the Michigan Whole Language Umbrella group since its beginning. They met once a month to share observations and talk about their teaching. They brought literature books to recommend and told how they had been used in their classrooms. They read books written by other teachers, attended summer writing conferences, and presented at conferences to share what they were learning. Many of these support group members were also Begindergarten teachers or were teachers who embraced a child-centered philosophy. When Mrs. Brown formed her Early Childhood Committee, many of its members were whole language advocates.

Begindergarten eliminated in favor of DAP

In 1988-89, the Chadwick taxpayers failed to override a state amendment limiting the amount of tax a district could levy which forced many district budget cuts. Among them was the Begindergarten program, and in its place the district instituted the DAP policy - designed to meet the needs of the wide range of students in early elementary classrooms. Based on the recently released report of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (Bredekamp, 1987), the developmentally appropriate practices required kindergarten teachers (and subsequently first and second grade teachers) to learn many strategies for teaching language arts, mathematics, science and social studies, as well as to use centers and integrate content areas through thematic instruction. In addition to responding to the NAEYC report, Chadwick administrators felt that the DAP policy was also an answer to criticisms outlined in *A Nation at Risk* concerning providing opportunities for students to achieve at more optimal levels and to criticisms outlined in the Carnegie Task Force and other reports which called for more teacher empowerment and professionalism. (Minutes, Regular School Board Meeting, July 25, 1988)

The Board of Education was asked to approve the "Developmental Primary Curriculum" at its meeting on October 10, 1988, at which time the Superintendent cited an article titled, "Who's Pushing Whom? Stress in Kindergarten" in the Phi Delta Kappan. He included a copy in the Board packet of materials and read the last paragraph aloud:

> Like other professionals, early childhood educators should be given a measure of trust as the people who best understand the developmental needs of children, and they should be empowered to design and implement programs to meet those needs. To ignore the stress that early academic programs can place on young children or the stress that conflict between philosophy and reality can place on the professionals who work with these young children is to risk education that does damage in the years when the foundations for future learning are laid. (Hatch & Freeman, 1988, p. 14)

As requested by the School Board, an assessment of the first year of the Kindergarten Developmental Curriculum was presented by Mrs. Brown at the July 24, 1989, Board meeting. Kindergarten teachers and parents had responded to a questionnaire asking for responses and suggestions for improvement. There were five pages of favorable comments from survey participants. There were also suggestions for the future. These included maintaining small class sizes; increasing per pupil allocation for adequate funding for consumable materials, resources books for teachers to use for ideas, and additional equipment for science, math and art. Teachers also requested more time to meet together (at least once a month) to share ideas, to observe each other, and to develop strategies for their teaching. They wanted more on-going communication among the schools and time to hold spring conferences with parents. The last suggestion was for "consistent district and interschool communication for interpreting, defining, and answering questions regarding the revised program" (First Year Assessment, 1989, p. 7).

The DAP policy was implemented in the first grade classrooms during the 1989-90 school year. That fall, each first grade teacher was presented with a 181 page notebook of materials created by the First Grade Task Force for a summer workshop and which was to be used as a resource for implementing the policy. It contained an introductory letter by the Superintendent, the district's Early Childhood Philosophy, information about how to set up and manage the classroom environment, a section on the curriculum, a list of resource materials, seven articles on early childhood education, and an overview of literacy and mathematics assessment. The policy advanced to the second grade classrooms during the 1990-91 school year. Again a summer workshop was held for those who could attend and a Second Grade Curriculum notebook was created.

The demands on practice

The DAP policy mandated that emphasis was to be taken away from the transmission model of instruction found in the basal reading series and EEEI in favor of a more constructivist, developmentally appropriate practice of using literature found in classroom and school libraries, tradebooks, and anthologies. The policy placed new demands on the practice of many teachers. While these demands were numerous, they centered on the areas of defining the teacher's role, time it took for preparation and instruction, and assessing student progress.

The teacher's role

The First Grade Curriculum Guide notebook described the teacher's role as being of "great importance" (1989, p. 39):

> Teachers actively model literate behavior, interact with students and organize classroom environments that invite students to use oral and written language. The key ingredient in a whole language classroom is the teacher who is fully aware of the course of child development, the skills of both reading and writing, children's literature, content fields, and models of integrating the curriculum (p. 40).

This view, very different from the direct instruction view of the teacher's role, was one of the most difficult aspects of the changes brought on by DAP for many teachers. Rather than having "teacher-directed classrooms using sequenced and structured materials" (EEEI, 5/1983, p. 4), teachers were to "organize classroom environments that invite students" to use language.

In addition, the tradition of providing reading instruction to groups of students according to ability meant that teachers planned "seat work" so that students not occupied in their reading group meeting with the teacher had something to do. "Seat work" activities generally included workbook pages, photocopied practice sheets and copying words or sentences from the chalkboard. Those practices were to be discontinued with the onset of the DAP policy at each grade level. In order to eliminate or reduce confusion about instruction, several sections of the First Grade Curriculum Guide (1989) highlighted differences between practices which were and were not "developmentally appropriate." The following chart was placed in the notebooks distributed to teachers who were implementing the policy:

GUIDELINES FOR INDIRECT AND DIRECT INSTRUCTION
IN WHOLE LANGUAGE AND CONVENTIONAL CLASSROOMS

WHOLE LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS	CONVENTIONALCLASSROOMS
Emphasis on indirect instruction	Emphasis on direct instruction.
Child's zone of proximal development; child centered.	Scope and sequence; basal readers.
Dialogue and teacher scaffolding.	Teacher script dominated.
Informal stance.	Formal stance.
Language whole, used in context.	Language fragmented, used out of context.
Intact literacy events; learning by doing.	Isolated skills teaching; rules.
Child's own writing used.	Worksheet, workbook dominated; copy writing.
Authentic oral language.	Preformulated, limited oral language.
Meaning/transactional interactive discourse.	Text bound/correctness driven.
Peer collaboration stressed.	Independent work stressed.

First Grade Curriculum Guide, 1989, p. 45

The curriculum materials provided with the grade level notebooks delineated general practices, but with special attention given to the necessity for teachers to allow children to "reach their own conclusions," "to construct their own meanings" from print, and to be actively engaged in their own learning. The general practices and guidelines were meant to acknowledge that teachers would interpret them in ways which seemed appropriate for their own classrooms and would also "reach their own conclusions," "construct their own meanings," and be actively engaged in their own learning. The administrators in the district believed they were empowering the teachers to be professional, to move away from reliance on the predetermined knowledge found in the texts toward their own judgment based on knowledge of "child development, the skills of both reading and writing, children's literature, content field, and models of integrating the curriculum" (First Grade Curriculum Guide, 1989, p. 40).

For some Chadwick teachers, the new demands on their practice brought on by the policy were not great. For example, many teachers at Hunter Woods and Kennedy schools had always felt that they had discretion about which materials and methods to use. Members of the whole language support group and previous Begindergarten teachers had been gradually moving away from basal books and direct instruction and found the new DAP policy refreshing and an affirmation of what they believed in. One veteran Chadwick teacher had experienced the changes from one form of accepted practice to another. The new practices reminded her of what it was like in Chadwick when she began thirteen years earlier. She had seen the move from multi-aged classes to the curriculum becoming departmentalized and combined classes seen "as a hindrance." While she felt that her philosophy had remained the same, "The methods that we've been delivering have kind of swung back and forth" (3/26/91, p. 3).

Time

One of the difficulties of taking away texts and workbooks and teachers' manuals which contained ideas and student practice pages was that teachers had to find books to use and had to create activities to support her or his language arts program. One teacher's response to my question about what took so much time for her centered on the materials - "the set up, the preparation of the materials in order to teach this way is horrendous - simply horrendous" (7/15/91c, p. 11). Another described her investment of time as "incredible" and added that in order to teach "this way," putting in the time was "absolutely" necessary, "you have no choice about it" (3/18/91, p. 2). She said that she was "so worn out from spending so much time trying to develop all this new stuff," that she worried she wasn't doing her best job in the classroom with the students. She felt that the district simply wasn't supportive in providing time for all that she had to do. She wanted to have "set-up time." She put in many hours before and after school as well as at home. The union contract allowed teachers some planning time, but is was before school which she considered her own time.

Ann Taylor had recently transferred to the school where the principal had removed all the basal readers in the summer. Because the teachers had relied on the basal, they did not have classroom collections of books. Ann said that collecting books took a lot of time and money.

> In our situation, the books were just sort of gotten rid of and I did not have that much literature in my room. Running to the library and trying to find enough for all those children and all those different levels I felt was an impossibility. I cleaned out my entire home library and took most of it in there (6/19/91, p. 3).

Ann was angry that the materials weren't provided for her. She felt that "if someone wanted me to teach this way" they could have at least allowed her a "slower transition" and could have provided more literature from the school district. She felt that she could "have done a better job" if she'd been able to ease into it more and not spend so much time hunting for books (p. 3).

Once they had books in hand, they still had to create materials, logs, or whatever to use with them. In addition, many teachers created centers for the students to use while smaller groups of students met to work with their books. Margie Nathan, a kindergarten teacher who had always considered herself developmental, thought developmental ideas had been around a long time, that they were "older than old" and had just come around again. She was glad for it, but agreed that it "is a lot more work." She said that when teachers relied on work sheets or workbooks, "you can lay out all of your work for a week in a few hours" and you can plan that it will probably take the students "ten minutes to do this workbook page and then do this ditto." But, if you are "doing centers," some of them might be "one day centers and some of them are two day centers and some you might keep all week." She said that "it's constant preparation for the centers" even for a teacher like herself who had made things and kept them organized - "you know, you have a box of this theme and your box of that theme." She still had a lot to remake and prepare (3/22/91, p. 3). Margie said that she often spent two hours after school "just straightening things out" and then she could spend another two hours at home "cutting things out and getting ready or just going and getting supplies." She had many parent helpers who worked at home cutting out and assembling materials for her. She also had parents who worked in the classroom, but she wanted them helping with the children rather than preparing things (p. 9). Margie didn't see the time issue getting any easier; she felt there was "more and more work all the time." She thought the policy ideas seemed reasonable, but found them difficult to implement:

> Theoretically, all of that sounds really good, but day to day, it gets harder and harder to keep up with. I thought it was just me because I haven't felt well, but when I talk to other kindergarten teachers, they are feeling it too and first grade teachers too. For the second grade teachers this year is awfully hard

> because they haven't been developmental so to speak and they have so much to learn and they're knocking themselves out (p. 10).

One teacher, who was a DAP advocate, worried that the "basal" teachers would reject the whole language, constructivist approach because of all the work with no time provided to create all the materials. "These people who have been working with the basal have all their stuff ready and then they have to switch over and it is a lot of work to make up all of your own ideas for every single book you use. " She saw that as a "big issue" and one which would undermine implementation. (7/31/92, p. 6).

Teachers also spent a lot of time helping parents understand the DAP policy. Many planned and held parent meetings, met with parents before and after school for individual conferences, and kept parents informed with frequent class newsletters. As one teacher said, "We need to teach parents about what we're doing and keep them invited and have them on the inside," otherwise, parents put a lot of pressure on teachers to do things they may not be comfortable doing (4/16/91, p. 11).

The issue of time was greatly affected by each teacher's personal life. Of the seventeen teachers who talked with me, only three had young children. All of the others either had grown children, were recently married with no children, or were single. Whatever the circumstances, each teacher volunteered information about the ways she managed to keep up with the work and about the effect the intensity of the work had on her personal and family life. The three teachers with young children had to find ways to balance their obligations. One teacher had two young sons so she did "a lot of stuff at home" and had worked out a plan with her husband so that she could stay at school one night every couple of weeks until "8:30 or 9:00." She said that it had taken a couple of years of struggling and prioritizing because she used to stay at school "until 8 o'clock every night" - and this was before the DAP policy. She said that her family had to come first and she has learned to use her time wisely while was is at school(3/26/91, p. 10).

Another said that it was "very difficult to have children and be a teacher in Chadwick" (7/15/91c, p. 11). She felt the "constant stress" to get outside training and to go to district workshops. She said, "It's stressful in the sense that you feel torn - you've got to be here, but you feel like you should be there" (p. 11). She felt pressure "that if you really are a good teacher," you would be at all the training sessions. She sensed that there was a "little clique" in the district which included "the real good teachers" and she wanted "to be a part of that" (p. 11).

However, even teachers who didn't have young families felt that their personal time was infringed upon by their school work. As one said, teachers began to resent having to put in so much overtime. She felt that her own interests "just kind of went out the window" because she didn't have time or the energy for them (6/18/91, p. 8). Carol Windsor was not a classroom teacher, but had many concerns about seeing her friends and colleagues putting in so much time. She said, "I just don't think that's a healthy way to live" (7/16/91, p. 5). In addition, she didn't want the work "to be an excuse for people to say, 'Well, I can't teach that way because - look, these people are burning out, they are having to work every minute'" (p. 5). She worried that if the district didn't find an answer to the question of work intensity, "the whole thing would drop" (p. 7).

This was a concern expressed by many of the teachers considered part of the "grass roots" for the policy. They worried that all of the work brought on by the sudden and drastic changes would undermine teachers' willingness and ability to do all that was required.

Assessing student progress

All of the teachers shared with me their sense of responsibility for student progress. One teacher said, “People are feeling less confident and they’re feeling nervous about - 'Am I doing it right?'" (4/16/91, p. 7). One teacher with twenty years of experience said that one of the hardest things for her about implementing the policy was "making judgments" (6/6/91, p. 12). Another said that she felt "much more responsible and that responsibility weighs on me more." She felt that it was a matter of "reading the kids and am I reading them correctly?" She worried that she wasn't providing for what they need. She said, "I'm constantly re-evaluating, constantly assessing what I'm doing and the way I'm doing it. It's much more introspective and that is harder emotionally because it doesn't leave you." (3/26/91, p. 9).

Many teachers were concerned about the accountability and asked themselves, "How am I going to really tell if these children are achieving something?" Several said that when they used the basals, the end of book tests provided a clear indication of where the children were; they had "proof." With the new approach to reading, one teacher said, "I find it very difficult to know - really - where the kids are" (6/21/91, p. 5). One teacher expressed concern that she didn't know what kids should be learning. She asked, "How much should they know by this time?" Unfortunately, she felt the answers were not forthcoming. "And I had nothing to base it on, so you know - I didn't know what they should be able to do when going on to second grade" (7/15/91b, p. 9).

Even some of the very experienced early childhood teachers expressed their difficulty in describing how they knew what they knew about their students. One teacher's response to my question about how she made decisions about her students was, "I don't know how I know. I've just done it for so long. You just make decisions" (7/10/91, p. 13). However, when teachers marked report cards or filled out the student portfolio forms, they had to be able to be specific and explain what they thought they were seeing. Judgment was challenged because the children did not always fit the literacy levels indicated on the various reporting forms and teachers questioned themselves even about their determination of level. If they closely followed the behaviors listed for each "literacy level," they were often led astray about their students. Because those levels came from early childhood research, when their observations of the students did not place students neatly into one category, it was easy for them to decide that they must not be assessing very accurately. If they could not trust their own judgment and they had nothing else upon which to make judgments, their concerns about noting student progress were increased.

Intended Consequences of the Policy

The DAP policy was instituted with the intent of creating early elementary classrooms which could meet the needs of all students, including those who would have previously been identified as at risk and placed in the Begindergarten program. Teachers were to create "multi-sensory classrooms" and base their programs on "a respect for individual learning styles and the theory that children construct their own knowledge through concrete, real-life experiences" (First Grade Curriculum Guide, 1989). Specifically, teachers were to follow the guidelines developed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children and the tenets of whole language; however, they were to put those guidelines into practice in ways which were appropriate to their own classroom contexts. In fact, the policy was quite successfully implemented by many teachers. For them, the intended consequences of the policy centered on four areas - the professional freedom facilitated by a pulling away from the arbitrary standards of the basal readers and tests, the elimination of ability grouping, the increased enthusiasm for reading and writing, and an improved atmosphere in the classroom.

Students in Chadwick had always scored well on state assessments, but a key point would be reached when the students who had experienced the DAP policy since kindergarten reached fourth grade and took the state tests. The School Board had asked for some kind of testing to monitor student achievement so, although it was protested by many teacher advocates of DAP, a test was selected by the Central Office administrators and was administered to second graders in a pilot in 1991 and to all third graders the following year. The students scored well, but there was no comparison data.

Professional freedom

Many teachers relished the professional freedom they felt the policy afforded them. Some of these teachers believed the policy allowed them to more comfortably return to practices they were once discouraged from doing. These teachers had been unhappy with the textbook focus but felt they had no choice but to use the books. Other teachers had never previously taught without the basal, but found that they had learned more about their students and enjoyed more professional freedom when they took steps away from the basal approach. One of these teachers described her first year of not using textbooks as "real teaching and not paper shuffling like it was before" (6/11/91, p. 1). She said that she realized it was the "textbook that set those arbitrary standards and imposed them on the children;" whereas, now you "can catch that spark of creativity" in children (p. 2). One teacher, who described herself as child-centered, said that she had allowed herself to be intimidated by the administration to use workbooks and had been told, "this is the basal and we're going to use it and that's it" (6/6/91, p. 4). She had taught long enough to see things come full circle and loved the freedom the policy offered her again. One new teacher had never used basals, but said that as a first year teacher, she might have been tempted to "cling to that little textbook;" however, she also recognized "that doesn't mean that you have been doing a very good job of teaching." This was being professional. "Anyone can come in off the street and read page 25." The practices required with DAP took a lot of time, but she saw it as "good teaching" and knowing that what the children were learning was largely self-directed (7/15/91b, p. 4).

Many teachers expressed their increased sense of professionalism as they implemented the guidelines in the DAP policy. One teacher had used the basal and instruction manuals because she "figured that was the way to do it." Lately, however, she felt she had grown and felt "confident and professional" in knowing how to make "the best decisions for my groups of kids" (3/26/91, p. 4). One teacher liked the changes because she felt that "now I could just - you know - jump in the deep end because I'm so excited about what I could do without workbooks and how I could prove that they could grow as much as anything " (7/15/91c, p. 4). A second grade teacher with twenty years experience with basal teaching in Chadwick, found that the policy released her from being "a prisoner of this book" (6/18/91, p. 11) and felt that the policy gave her permission to decide for herself how much time her students needed to learn and what materials might be appropriate to help them learn. Another traditional teacher did jump right in, even though she had consistently followed the basal before. She said that she felt like "this is what teaching should be - sharing myself and my ideas" (6/11/91, p. 3). She really liked the fact that she could do something thoroughly and not be bound up into reading groups and so much material. She felt that the previous emphasis on skills first was misguided. "We had it exactly backwards before - teaching the skills before we would let them read" (p. 3).

Eliminating ability groups

Others agreed that there were positive benefits for the children. Many were happy to see the district moving away from ability grouping. One teacher at Hunter

Woods said that she had always been able to self-select materials, but they were still ability grouping. While she found managing the teaching more difficult, she could see the benefits "because there are no kids in here saying, 'I can't read. I can't read that book.' You know? That, I think, is real neat" (3/26/91, p. 3). Judy Jones, another Hunter Woods teacher, agreed that the elimination of ability groups in her classroom brought dramatic changes in her students. She said, "This year, all the kids view themselves as readers. Much more so that they did in the past. There used to be feelings of 'I can't do it' and I feel that self esteem has been improved. It's really improved" (6/10/91, p. 11).

Enthusiasm for reading and writing

Teachers reported a dramatic increase in the students' enthusiasm for reading and in their interest in books and authors. One teacher said, "If people could somehow see the attitudes of the kids as compared to the attitudes before when the only time you read was when your reading group came up. Kids now clamor to read - or write" (3/26/91, p. 7).

A media specialist felt that she had a good perspective on the students' increased enthusiasm for reading because she worked with students year after year and could view their development over time. She said that students knew authors and would ask for specific books by name much more than they did in the past. Often they would share with her their interest in a particular genre asking for additional books of that type.

Improved classroom environment

One teacher explained that the best part of the policy was that she "saw a lot of kids who really felt like they were succeeding that before had felt that they weren't." In the past, she felt that when kids had "a general assignment to do," some would always feel that they "could get it and some didn't." She felt that with more open-ended assignments no one felt "like they couldn't get it or that they were the less intelligent kids in the class" (7/15/91a, p. 3).

A first grade teacher, who, although she had been a preschool teacher before starting her career in Chadwick ten years earlier, felt that she was rather "traditional" and had previously followed the basal readers as the district had asked. She did not like to "jump in" to new ideas; she said, "I go a toe at a time - not both feet." She liked the changes brought on with the policy because she felt "much more relaxed at school. It seems like such a better feeling - a better atmosphere and I don't feel the pressure where I used to where you had to do this and this and this" (6/21/91, p. 1). She added that she liked the whole feeling of getting away from the basal readers "where the kids know that I do this book and then I do this book." She felt that children put pressure on themselves and would "feel dumb because this kid is three books ahead of me" (p. 1).

Joan Moore also said that she "enjoyed teaching more" with the DAP policy and felt that she got "to know the kids better" (6/18/91, p. 6). She wasn't exactly sure what caused that difference, but at the end of the year, she could just think of all of them and feel that she knew them and their families very well. She thought her ability to interact with the students more might account for it. Instead of having worksheets and all the assigned work, the students were sharing about themselves and their opinions in their responses to reading and in Writing Workshop. She said she always wanted to get to know the kids, but felt that "you're like in a trap. You've got all this paper work." She said, "Now the kids are writing, but instead of a zillion worksheets...they are doing their own writing" (p. 6). Joan said that she used to be "a maniac" about "running stuff off all the time." She was "always so uptight about getting this stuff out that they need to have." She knew that she had previously done a good job and was a good teacher, but this approach provided her with more freedom and was more relaxed (p. 6). She and others felt that being released from the mandates of the textbook improved the classroom atmosphere tremendously.

Unintended Consequences

The DAP policy did make some significant differences in the ways young students were taught in many classrooms and brought a sense of professionalism to many teachers. There were, however, consequences to mandating a more constructivist approach which were not intended nor desired. The speed at which the policy was to be implemented created a situation in which it was difficult for many teachers and principals to establish personal meaning of the policy. Some believed the policy represented an opportunity for philosophical discussions and some believed that practices were the primary focus. Although they identified a paradigm shift in defining knowledge and how to teach in a constructivist way, in an effort to get the policy into place, policy makers severely limited discussion employing a transmission model of learning for the teachers while they asked the teachers to use a constructivist approach in their own teaching.

There were problems with the directed autonomy approach which formed the foundation for the policy's implementation. The unequal power relations involved in mandating the policy created an arena for resistance on the part of some of the teachers. Additionally, the risks involved in constructivist teaching were ignored as teachers dealt with uncertainty within a policy which seemed to suggest that research could be directly translated into practice and the practices would surely improve student learning.

Difficulty in establishing the meaning of the policy

Contradictions in opportunities to learn

The Chadwick district mandated DAP as a effort to infuse teaching with constructivist, child-centered practices to provide optimal learning for students. As teachers worked to implement the recommended practices however, the contradictions between the kinds of learning opportunities the policy recommended for students and the process by which the teachers were able to learn about the policy and to implement it became apparent. The policy's official view was that "knowledge is constructed through concrete, real-life experiences;" however, the ways in which teachers were to come to know the theory behind the policy and were to understand how to use the practices which were considered appropriate reflected a different district view. The teachers were to create environments in their classrooms which enabled children to "acquire, adapt and apply knowledge as they construct new or expanded concepts" (First Grade Curriculum Guide, 1989, p. 37). This involved encouraging children to "develop their own criteria for classifying," "to reach their own conclusions," "to attempt multiple approaches," and to "emphasize the process of children's thinking" (p. 38). The teachers, however, were provided with a list of practices which were not open to dispute because of their solid base in research and in "the literature" on early childhood education. Even though they were told to implement the practices in their own ways and to work slowly toward full implementation within three to five years, many felt pressured to get the practices in use almost immediately because previously used materials were, in many cases, no longer available. Workbooks were no longer purchased and, in some schools, textbooks were removed from the buildings during the summer. Also, many teachers felt obliged to use the practices as soon as possible because they trusted that their use would improve student learning and that previous practices had somehow impeded learning. By employing those practices, they also would be considered professional - members of the group of Chadwick teachers now seen as "very good teachers."

Hazel Brown wanted the teachers to think seriously about their teaching and about how their students were going about learning to read and write. In her view, one way to empower the teachers to do that thinking was to mandate the removal of workbooks and basal texts. For some teachers, this was a wonderful and refreshing change - permission to do what they had wanted to do all along. For others, this was an indication that they weren't really empowered to make the important decisions about their teaching. They saw this policy as simply the newest addition in a long list of practices mandated by the central administrators' view of what constituted "good teaching." Good teaching had, until very recently, been direct instruction using a textbook and the use of assessments designed to assure them that students understood the information as presented and now it was indirect instruction and student construction of knowledge using literature with assessments which seemed vague and subjective.

With the abundance of information available to teachers from their grade level curriculum notebooks, summer workshops, and district-wide inservice meetings, one would think that the teachers would have a fairly clear idea about what the DAP policy meant in terms of their teaching of literacy. That was not the case. Unfortunately, wide variations in meaning increased the challenges involved in implementing an already challenging reform. Some of the teachers I talked with felt the meaning of the policy centered first on their personal understanding of a developmental philosophy and learning theories and then on a variety of practices which fit those understandings. Most of these people described themselves as always having had the philosophy and they expressed a sense of empowerment afforded to them by this mandate - a "rekindling of intellectual curiosity," as one media specialist put it (7/16/91, p. 7). Others felt the policy meant changing what they were doing, which they felt had worked for the students, and implementing someone's idea of more "appropriate" practices. The policy was forcing them to do without the texts and procedures they had previously used because something new was now in vogue.

Teachers who felt the meaning of the policy centered on philosophy or beliefs about teaching and learning were most frequently part of the grass-roots group. All of these teachers who talked with me anticipated problems with trying to mandate a change in beliefs saying that the district could not expect people to change just because they were told to. They felt that without discussion of beliefs, nothing would change substantially. One said that she could not understand how a teacher could say, "I don't agree with this at all, but if you say I have to do it, I'll do it." She felt discussions were necessary allowing teachers to talk about what they do and why. She said,

> We have to talk about philosophy and we have to talk about beliefs and those big issues. Because until we can talk about that, the how to implement it, if you're working from a different philosophical bases, it's just different. Until we can talk about it and agree to disagree about things. ...We have to be able to say I think this about how kids learn and that's why I choose to do it this way. To say that I think kids should do it this way because they've always done it this way and it worked for me - is not an educational philosophy. It may be an observation, but let's talk about it (4/16/91, p. 5-6).

These teachers also expressed concern about both the top-down mandate and the speed at which the district asked teachers to respond. One thought that, as a result, some teachers got "short-circuited." And yet they recognized the dilemma of not mandating the policy and felt that the district couldn't wait forever. Most of the philosophy-oriented teachers were involved in creating the curriculum and designing staff development opportunities. However, they were a fraction of the total staff. This role of participation in the early stages of the policy was another area of difficulty with establishing the meaning of the policy. Huberman and Miles (1984) found evidence that involving too many people can create confusion, especially when action is slow in coming. On the other hand, as was the case in Chadwick, when small groups are involved, it's often the members of the committee who develop the meaning, not everyone else (Fullan and Stiegelbauer, 1991). Darling-Hammond, in reviewing case studies of teachers implementing mathematics reform in California, revealed that when curriculum is planned by a few and presented to the rest there are problems.

> Teachers then receive the message through a filter, with much of the information and most of the contextual clues screened out. They are not expected to interpret the policy by constructing meaning for themselves, but only to implement the simplified version of it that reaches them (1990, p. 236).

A major difference between the vast California initiative and the Chadwick DAP policy was that the teachers and administrators in Chadwick were viewed as actors rather than simply as conduits for the policy, which may have indicated a greater need for clarity of meaning.

None of the teachers who viewed the policy as centering on practices were members of any of the Grade level Task Forces and all received their understanding of the policy through other district "filters." One of the elementary principals shed light on the differences between teachers who felt that the policy was about philosophy and those who understood it as practices. This principal had been at two schools in Chadwick and reflected on the difference between the two. She felt that the teachers in her present school were excellent, but their views of teaching differed significantly from most of the teachers with whom she had worked at Hunter Woods. She said that the first grade teachers in her school didn't want to hear about theory. "They want to know about strategies and activities and what to do with kids." Her teachers had seen that their students did learn to read and write with the basal and with their direct instruction and as a result, "it's harder for them to understand the policy and put it all together because they don't see the reason." She went on to say that the teachers felt they were "giving up control to something that they don't trust" (10/18/90, p. 20).

The various ways the teachers interpreted the policy created very different learning opportunities for students. Rather than consider what a constructivist approach meant and how this theory about learning is related to not using workbooks, the district's focus on practices led many teachers astray. Some of the teachers felt the policy was about setting up centers in their classrooms and they spent hours and hours designing skill sheets which the students filled in as they went from one table to another in timed sequences. Others insisted the policy would not allow them to teach the children the letters or sounds. When these teachers talked with me, they expressed resentment that the practices were so different from what they had done before and which had been successful. The implication for many of these teachers was that the activities they had previously been doing were wrong. As one principal said, whenever you hear the word "improve," the connotation is that what was being done before was not good enough. People want to know why. He said that if we can't show them that what they were doing before was wrong, "then it's a simple matter of one person's belief system imposed on another person's." He said, "And so, in our district, that feeling is out there" (10/29/90, p. 6).

One teacher said that the "new things" keep coming up all the time and "they are all supposed to be innovative and revolutionize teaching - [laugh] - like instructional skills." Then, within a few years, it is out of favor: "Those worksheets we did - NO! NO! It was okay a few years ago, but not now" (3/18/91, p. 13). Several other teachers commented that the many mandated changes over the years had created turmoil. One said she had always worked diligently to make the changes in practice the district asked her to change, but she was getting tired of it. "You try to change and yet it's generally just more of the same - always trying to reinvent the wheel or changing the curriculum" (6/18/91, p. 10).

Many of the teachers most dedicated to the policy were also the most worried about the success of attempting to mandate what they viewed as fundamental philosophical changes. It was not so much that they worried that their colleagues could not make the changes, but rather that, by mandating a philosophy, the administrators would inadvertently undermine the efforts for change. Linda Darling-Hammond (1990) described efforts such as the DAP policy as an effort "to revive progressive education from the top down - an idea what may seem vaguely paradoxical or even heretical to those who have seen similar educational ideas associated with bottom-up reform" (p. 233). Hazel Brown was totally committed to the policy and by several accounts may have been waiting her whole career in Chadwick to see such a policy created, but her commitment may have been part of the problem. While she consistently and publicly announced her wish for teachers to be open with concerns, she communicated to principals and learning specialists who were charged with overseeing the implementation of the policy in their schools that disagreement would not be tolerated. The Language Arts Curriculum Coordinator, under direct orders from Mrs. Brown, would not permit any discussion of concerns about meeting the needs of low-proficiency readers and writers during meetings of the Learning Specialists. According to Fullan and Stiegelbauer's (1991) review of research on policy implementation, "Ironically, in many ways the more committed an individual is to the specific reform of change, the less effective her or she will be in getting others to implement it" (p. 9), especially if that vision results in "impatience and failure to listen" (p. 95).

The policy itself and staff development sessions to learn about the policy stressed specific practices and much emphasis was placed on drawing lines between what was appropriate to do and what was inappropriate. Whereas the teachers were to support the children in their attempts and encourage their approximations in their learning, teachers felt they had little time and little support from administrators or parents for their own attempts and approximations; the primary concerns the teachers expressed for themselves were "Am I doing it right?" "Just tell me what to do and I'll do it." Rather than reflect on the implications and meaning of DAP, teachers scurried to learn how to do the practices or resisted learning them because "powers that be" were telling them how to teach.

Difficulties with a paradigm shift - What constitutes knowledge?

I previously shared a brief history of the Chadwick district's policies for materials and instruction leading up the implementation of the DAP policy. One of the difficulties encountered as they moved from teaching with textbooks and direct instruction to such practices as using literature and real-life, problem-solving situations and a constructivist, child-centered approach rested on assumptions about what constitutes knowledge. The DAP policy presented a publicly stated view that "knowledge is constructed." All teachers and administrators were shown a video on "paradigm shifts" in which "visionaries" were identified as people in the business world who could see beyond the present situation and shift their thinking to break out of old molds. I believed that the intent with showing this video was to convince teachers that old ways of thinking were no longer appropriate and that they had to join the movement led by the visionaries. A teacher expressed concern about this video when it was shown at the Kennedy staff meeting stating it seemed that dichotomies were established. "Rather than building upon what we know," she said, "the video seems to advise throwing out all old ideas in favor of new." She said that teaching was a lot like parenting and that while there was always more to learn, she could not see taking off in a totally different direction. In the discussion which followed her comments, other teachers disagreed and felt that the time had come for this shift. The teachers at Kennedy had been moving away from textbook instruction. They said that the benefits they saw for their students should be available for all district students and that perhaps mandating change was the only way to get real change accomplished. Their changes had been made slowly, however, and they did not fully appreciate the difficulties involved in moving from one paradigm about knowledge to another. Even those teachers and administrators who felt they understood that "knowledge is constructed" were faced with contradictions between what the policy stated and ways in which the practices themselves were determined by the administration and the experts of NAEYC and the ASCD Early Childhood Committee and ways in which these were to be transferred to the teachers.

The Kennedy teachers who had begun to use trade books and the writing process had been learning a lot about their teaching from each other, from resources published by such companies as the Wright Group and Richard Owens Publications and in support groups. They were also learning from their students about what was of interest to them, which choices offered were seen as sincere, and how to manage a more democratic classroom environment. They had been thinking about practices, materials and resources much differently than they had before. Hazel Brown admired the changes in their practice and she admired the child-centered teaching of the Begindergarten teachers. She also wanted that kind of teaching for all Chadwick children.

A shift in thinking is not always accomplished simply because someone says you must change. Many teachers and administrators in Chadwick had come to view textbook materials and the people who created them in certain ways. Literacy was certainly one case in point. They had previously been told that basal reading materials are created scientifically by reading experts and that by using these materials students would learn to read well. According to Patrick Shannon, who has written extensively on the use of basals for reading instruction, university courses, textbooks, and national research journals had traditionally supported basal reading instruction so exclusively that it appeared that no other approach made sense. Even today most school districts tend to rely on commercial reading materials to maintain public confidence in the reading programs because these materials appear to assure the public that district standards are high and that the methods used are efficient and effective. Maintaining public support is so important, Shannon says, that to protect against teachers' attempts to use materials subjectively, teachers often had to be "controlled by some external technology in order to render it sufficiently predictable in the production of verifiably literate students" (1989, p. 75). Chadwick's policy had put so much emphasis on reading texts that teachers were required to submit students' end-of-book test answer sheets to Central Office for scoring and recording. Shannon maintains that a particular view of knowledge is evident when teachers are the support system for the textbook and when standardized, commercial materials form the driving force of reading lessons.

> Left unexamined and untouched...is the assumption that knowledge is a thing separate from the process of knowing - that knowledge can be produced outside the context of classrooms and then simply implanted in students' minds in some way. Despite basal publishers' and reading experts' rhetoric to the contrary, this separation of knowledge from knowing is central to the rationalization of reading programs wherein the basal publishers...determine

> what knowledge is worth knowing, and then, teachers around the U.S. transfer this knowledge from basals to their students. (Shannon, 1989, p. 123)

Shannon contrasts this view of knowledge with one which understands that "knowledge and knowing are dialectically related and inseparable - that knowledge is nothing more than the product of individuals involved in the social process of coming to know something" (p. 123). He says, "Knowledge is not a gift from others, but a gift to oneself - the result of curiosity, action, uncertainty, judgment, and conversation" (p. 123, emphasis added). This latter view of knowledge is the one which the DAP policy wanted teachers to shift toward, but coming so close on the heels of knowledge as something delivered within a text to be taught and tested, the shift was very challenging for many people to make.

Shannon is one of many researchers, including Apple (1986) and Cuban (1984, 1986, 1990) who have reported about the persistence of teacher-centered practices in the face of recent and age-old understandings about the importance of student-centered classrooms. Contributing more recent observations to their reports is Judith Langer (1991) who looked at literacy and schooling and found that it was not until the 1980s, in response to "the incorporation of sociolinguistic and anthropological conceptions of literacy events and literacy environments into studies of literacy that research into literacy processes and instruction united" (p. 10). The necessary assumption undergirding this work is that "use shapes thinking and learning, and that the contribution of context and culture cannot be overstated in what is learned and how" (p. 10). Langer sighted instructional advances which grew out of this work as "whole language, writing process, and writing across the curriculum" - all practices supported or mandated by the DAP policy. Langer went on to say, however, "Yet, to date these movements remain nascent, having no widespread effect on achievement" (pp. 10-11). She said, "For changes to occur, new notions of what literacy means and how it can be learned are in order" (p. 11). Part of the difficulty, even for teachers who are committed to learn new approaches such as writing process, is that

> Their attempts to focus on more thoughtful writing activities were undercut by their deeply rooted views of their role as 'transmitter' of knowledge - and with it their overarching concern with diagnosing what students needed to learn, teaching the missing information, and testing to evaluate the success of that teaching. This pattern of test-teach-test left even the best intentioned teachers with little room to encourage students to think, muse, and grow as writers and readers. (p. 14)

The sociocognitive view which Langer describes grew out of theories on language and literacy learning, psychology, anthropology and sociolinguistics, and is rooted in the belief that learners do not learn rule-governed systems such as language by having the rules presented to them by others and then practicing the rules. According to Langer, this view leads to "substantive change in the ways in which literacy learning and issues of schooling are addressed." Educators need to pay attention to "ways in which literacy is used, what is valued as knowing, how it is demonstrated and communicated, and the kinds of thinking as well as content knowledge that result" (p. 18). The environments which are more likely to encourage students to think and behave in these ways are "social contexts in which there are shared problems to solve or issues to discuss." There will also be situations where there is "more than one right answer" and where any answer "will need to be shared with and justified to other people who may disagree or misunderstand" (p. 18).

To some extent, this is the view presented by the DAP policy about literacy as well. Major difficulties present themselves, however, when one attempts to find reference to social contexts, diversity in what counts as literacy, or an understanding of the role of culture[2] in either the NAEYC documents or the DAP policy itself. And, even if we could locate the rhetoric in regard to students, the ways in which the teachers were treated was a counter indication to any consensus within the district about the kind of learning Langer described. Grass-roots teachers learned to do what they did through a "process of interacting with others to complete tasks in meaningful and functional situations" - they had recognized problems or difficulties in their teaching and had sought personal ways to address those problems. In doing so, they developed or refined teaching skills. The teachers who had followed previous textbook, direct-instruction mandates, were provided with the practices as "rule-governed systems" by which to learn.

The contradictions between what the DAP policy espoused as a definition of knowing or learning serve to show how difficult it is to move from the transmission model to an understanding of the personal construction of knowledge. As David Cohen and Carol Barnes (1993a) found in their investigations into the possibilities of policy to provide learning opportunities for those who implement them, it is difficult for policymakers to break away from the transmission model themselves. The ambitious DAP policy came on the heels of the transmission model, textbook-based, Madeline Hunter approach. While district policymakers meant to move away from that to demand a more thoughtful and intellectual approach to teaching and to empower teachers to create their own interpretations of practice, it became more expedient to simply tell the teachers what it was they were to do. They wanted teachers to understand that students would approach their learning in individual ways affected by their previous experiences and their self-confidence; however, the time for such learning for teachers was not available. They did not have the time to work together to construct shared belief or understanding. Cohen and Barnes also found few instances "in which policymakers or program managers engaged educators in extended instructional conversations that were designed to encourage the desired learning" (p. 210). The policymakers in their studies, much like those in Chadwick, had been in the habit of telling learners what they should learn, without much attention to what teachers thought, already knew, or understood the policy to mean.

The grass-roots teachers had taken it upon themselves to learn in ways Langer and Shannon describe. Their own curiosity, uncertainty, searching for answers to problems which they had personally recognized, and continuing conversations with other teachers led them to slowly and deliberately move toward a greater infusion of student-centered practices. If the district had been able to provide all the teachers with the same kinds of learning environments which Langer envisioned, rather than receiving the district's solution to a problem, they would have set their own problems as well as attempted to find solutions, and they would have had to defend their stances and beliefs to all - even those who disagreed. Rather than have particular practices mandated, a more optimal learning environment would have provided them with an on-going process of "interacting with others to complete tasks" in their classrooms and schools ("meaningful and functional situations"). Their knowledge would develop as they worked together to make sense of what they observed and did and they would be more likely to "internalize the principles of approaches to that work." They would help each other move from the transmission model of learning which had been the basis of their teaching to a clearer and more cohesive understanding of what it means to "construct meaning."

---

[2] The DAP policy presented the NAEYC view of appropriate practices which has been criticized for its exclusion of the roles of culture and social context in a child's "development." Excellent sources for a review of the criticisms include: David Engleby (1986) - Development in Social Context. In M. Richards and P. Light (Eds.) *Children and Social Worlds - Development in a Social Context* (pp. 297-317). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Jean La Fontaine (1986). An anthropological perspective on children in social worlds. (pp. 1-30) in the same book listed above. Bruce Mallory and Rebecca New (Eds.) 1994. *Diversity & Developmentally Appropriate Practices. Challenges for Early Childhood Education.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Teachers felt the need to get together and share what they were doing; however, even when the district did provide staff development time during the first years of the policy, sessions would be so tightly scheduled that teachers still had no time to talk with each other. One teacher said,

> And when they did have some of those that first year of developmental and they would have a meeting or have a half-day or whatever. They'd have a speaker and there was no time for us. It was like they were afraid we were going to waste our time if they said - 'We're going to have you all get together and hash over what you need to hash over.' They think we'd waste our time. So much of it was planned that people talked on the way in and on the way out. I would hope that they don't continue to do that - they need to progress past that (3/22/91, p. 11-12).

District policymakers did want all of those things for teachers; however, circumstances such as the necessity to get the practices quickly into place and the reduced time available for staff development coupled with the inability to realize the amount of teacher learning required for such a paradigm change, undermined even the best of intentions.

No opportunity for discussion - Feeling silenced

The dichotomy between language arts instructional practices identified as "appropriate" and "inappropriate" by the DAP policy was a source of conflict for many teachers. One described the policy as "throwing the baby out with the bathwater" (7/22/92, p. 1) because it seemed that all formerly used practices were considered taboo. Even teachers like Ann Taylor, who considered herself very developmental, felt that "some people who are running things say throw all of this out - I don't care if you used it or not - get rid of it and we'll try something new" (7/20/92, p. 3). Sometimes teachers "resorted" to practices they felt wouldn't be approved of by the administration. At other times, they deliberately chose to employ a practice the policy identified as "inappropriate," but this choice put them on the defensive about their teaching. For example, Dorothy Marks described her dilemma in leaving plans for a substitute teacher. Previously, she could have simply listed the pages in the teacher's manuals for the various subject areas, listed the workbook pages the students were do, and run off copies of practice pages for "seat work." Dorothy found it difficult to explain all the different things she was doing with DAP in a way which would be understood by the substitute, so she finally left a work sheet for her to do. She said, "Yet work sheets are supposed to do all these bad things for kids, so I actually felt guilty making up a work sheet for the substitute." She added,

> I feel all the time like I'm on a guilt trip - we all feel guilty doing some of the things - like most of us still have reading groups - most of us still do spelling and yet, I know, the kids get a lot of benefit from these. I don't use them exclusively; the reading groups change all the time. It's not like a kid is going to be stuck in it, but one of the things which has really bothered me - and if you look at the First Grade Curriculum Guide, there is a page with a column on the left side that says - the old way - and it really says - this is the bad way and

> over here is the new way and all this is good. I think I've been made to feel too guilty about trying to do the things we've been taught to do. I know that some people have said that they could be driven crazy with feeling guilty and I think there are a lot of benefits to some of the old things (3/18/91, p. 4).

Many teachers mentioned other teachers in their schools who "think they are using appropriate practices," but who are not. While some teachers worried that what they did would be considered wrong, others did not seem to be bothered. One teacher described how another teacher simply photocopied "the whole spelling book" and most pages from various old reading workbooks. In her view, "That's not really where it's at" (6/11/91, p. 13). Some teachers had the kind of centers Margie Nathan described which were simply worksheets and the teacher would set a timer requiring the children to move to a new "center" every twenty minutes or so (7/20/92, p. 14). Another teacher said that "the real bottom line is that most of our primary teachers in the district still don't have an conceptual grasp of what this is" (7/10/91, p. 4).

All of the teachers and principals said that it helps to talk; otherwise, people feel that they aren't being listened to. Without discussion, the idea comes across as "this is what you should do - period." One teacher said about her efforts to deal with her questions and uncertainties, "I'm feeling like the person isn't really listening to what I'm saying and they are just trying to convince me. Then sometimes, I am turned off. I feel like - I understand that this is what you think I should do, but you really aren't listening to me" (7/27/92, p. 14-15).

One teacher worried that because the policy mandated "this is how it will be done," and then "let everyone go off on their own" it was a recipe for disaster (7/15/91a, p. 16). Open discussions, where people felt safe to question, inquire, talk, and listen were seen as vital. She said that sometimes she and others felt "dumb for asking these questions, showing that they did not understand. Her explanation for this feeling was

> I guess you could look at it in a few different ways. You have a person who's been teaching for fifteen or twenty years and look at all the years of experience they've had - they should know this. Or the person is new and feeling like - I'm supposed to know this - they hired me and I'm supposed to know. You don't want people to think that you're - do you know what I mean? You have to make it safe for people to feel that it's okay to ask questions and it's okay to question what's going on and try to understand it better. There are probably people who don't feel safe and it's probably the people who are resisting (p. 18).

This teacher's statement was quite accurate in terms of feeling that some people didn't feel it was safe to ask questions. However, the people who talked with me didn't consider themselves resistors, but they felt that others in the district did think of them in that way. Charlene Hoover, one of the learning specialists, talked to me about the difficulty she and other learning specialists had in trying to talk about their role with the DAP policy. It seemed to her (several other learning specialists' comments supported her contention) that the learning specialist role had changed dramatically, but it was all done with mandates from Central Office and especially from the Language Arts Curriculum Coordinator, who supervised the learning specialists. Charlene said that if a learning specialist asked a question - "and they're only asking for more information - not shooting it down - she draws a conclusion that you, somehow, don't agree" (10/11/90, p. 5).

> And then, what happens next, is that the world is divided into two camps. These people who are asking questions are called resistors and it's a very awful

> position to be in because you're viewed as a 'stick-in-the-mud,' an old fogey. Even my principal tells me that's the one thing he fears - being put in that category. And then you spend all your time saying, 'I'm not in that group.' When what you really want to do is just dialogue about your thoughts (p. 5).

Charlene felt that everyone who wasn't a vocal, enthusiastic supporter got "labeled" and perceived as a "resistor." She always thought of herself as an "innovator," but lately, she's found that she's "busy fighting an image that isn't even true." Charlene saw this as a tactic by Central Office to get people so busy defending themselves that "they can't express their point of view" (p. 5). On the contrary, Charlene said that it was "absolutely critical" that the district support DAP, but that some administrators have "power needs" which circumvent the dialogue process. Charlene felt that they needed to "tell us what we'll do and what we won't do" and even go so far "as to put it in writing" (p. 6).

Teachers had been admonished to turn some control over to the students, but Charlene felt that the Central Office administrators were not ready to do that for the teachers. During our second conversation Charlene said that she would like to see the school district enable people to meet in a kind of "quality circle," in which educators work cooperatively to share or network and "to feel like they have some say about what's happening." The people in the circle would be committed to each other and try to solve problems as a group (1/14/91, p. 1). Other learning specialists made very similar comments about their need to talk, but how those opportunities were simply never provided for them. One said, "It was just never offered for us to talk and when you did ask to have it put on the agenda, it would never show up" (12/6/90, p. 7). This learning specialist said that her colleagues were "afraid to say anything." She thought that talking would allow everyone "to grow," "to hash it out," and "come to consensus." Instead, she felt they "got their hands slapped" because "people" couldn't place their trust in them (p. 7).

Even advocates for the policy felt silenced many times. As the anger grew among teachers who felt compromised by the mandated practices, teachers who believed in them spoke up less and less often. One teacher felt the negative reactions to the policy were a result of "the nature of how it came about" (7/10/91, p. 6). She thought that many teachers, who might otherwise be favor of the practices, resisted them because they were mandated. The result was that whether you tried to use appropriate practices or not, you were often silenced.

The stress of "appropriate" over "inappropriate" set up divisiveness among the teachers causing some teachers who favored the policy to retreat back into their classrooms as they had done in the years prior to DAP. The policy they welcomed as an affirmation of their work created a power struggle with the administration about who would decide which practices were in favor at the moment. Those teachers who embraced the policy were viewed as "in power" and became the force to struggle against.

Uncertainty - Are students learning to read and write successfully?

Feeling silenced also affected teachers' ability to help students. Many teachers had learned how to use the basal reading materials very effectively and had seen their students learn using the "old" methods and questioned whether the DAP policy was really going to be better. One teacher told how she had worked hard to plan lessons according to "Madeline Hunter" which, with all the new methods, was "just a blur in [her] mind" (3/18/91, p. 13). While she was willing to put in many, many hours of her time, she wasn't truly convinced this way was any better than the old way. She said that the teacher across the hall from her, "who is really gung-ho developmental and whole language," tells her that two thirds of her kids "are weak." Dorothy said that "we think we're teaching kids to read, but I'm not sure that we really are," In her classroom, she would find that three or four of her students might have problems, but "the rest of them sail right along" (p. 8). She wondered if all the DAP activities really had a goal which led the students toward reading. She said, "You can do things that are fun, but when it comes to academic things, you don't just do them because they are neat to do" (p. 9).

Teachers did not feel that they were getting the same amount of help for students as they had before the policy. Learning specialists were not allowed to "establish a caseload" of students to help which made some feel that consistent support was unavailable. This occurred at a time when teachers were supposed to know more about how to teach language arts and yet the district had not provided them with enough opportunities to learn how to do this without the textbook teachers' guides. Margaret White worried that part of the problem with children who weren't progressing well was that some teachers only knew one way to teach reading to young children and that by giving up the basal series they were floundering. She said that it certainly was true that many teachers were having to learn new assessment techniques to replace the book tests. It was also true that many teachers had to learn how to teach young children to read without following the scripted teacher's manual. Margaret said "what fouls things up sometimes is that you need to know where you want to get to" in teaching the children and "how you get there needs to be based on what you know and if you don't know enough to get there except one way, then read, figure out by talking to somebody, watch somebody or whatever." The point is, she said, we still have to get there - children have to learn to read. It frustrated her to hear that some teachers felt that children will learn to read "when they're ready." She said, "Well, there is an element of that, but they still need to read and we still need to be doing everything we can to make that happen and as soon as it can happen" (4/16/91, p. 12).

Funding cuts resulted in the removal of support teachers and the attempt to change the support in language arts from a remedial pull-out program to one which provided help to both teachers and students within the classroom resulted in increasing the complexity of teaching for many teachers. The DAP policy required teachers to learn about teaching differently. They had to know how to teach reading and writing to very young students; they couldn't rely on a series of lessons provided in textbooks and they couldn't rely on commercial tests to tell them whether or not students were making progress. For many teachers, they were learning how to teach while they were teaching. Judgments about student progress and getting help for themselves and their students were just part of the difficulties.

Teachers who were opposed to the policy felt threatened with possible chastisement if they spoke openly. An anonymous letter was sent to the local newspaper and to the members of the Board of Education which expressed the dissent of at least some teachers who felt compelled to share their concerns about student learning:

> The majority, we believe 90 percent, of [Chadwick] elementary teachers are opposed to most of the developmental approach to education children. ..Teachers are not being given a choice about using these methods, it is being forced on us. ...Teacher morale is low partly because we feel that what we are doing is wrong for children. We do not dare talk openly against it as a number of teachers have been given verbal reprimands for doing so. ...This approach will fail and something new will be instituted. In the meantime, the children educated developmentally will be the losers. ("Letter charges," 1990c, p. 1)

The administrators expressed astonishment that any teacher or group of teachers would make such a public statement without first coming to them with their concerns. Mrs. Brown was greatly concerned that some teachers felt so maligned and silenced.

From textbook experts to Early Childhood experts - Who has the power?

The DAP policymakers wanted to empower teachers to decide on materials and methods by officially permitting them to move away from reliance on the textbook experts; however, teachers understood that new experts were identified which in many ways served to contradict the intent of the empowerment. For example, the "Rationale" Hazel Brown presented to the Chadwick School Board in spring, 1988, to garner support for the DAP policy cited ninety-four research reports. When administrators and later, teachers, said that the DAP policy was based on research, they were certainly correct. The following excerpt is typical of the statements made in the Rationale document:

> Development in all domains - cognitive, physical, social and emotional- progresses through a series of sequential and hierarchical stages which are universal and predictable (Piaget, 1950; Hunt, 1961; Bloom, 1964; Erikson, 1950). Stages cannot be skipped (Hymes, 1964). Bypassing or trying to push children through developmental stages contributes to children's early school failure, their dislike of learning, and will likely affect their future learning because of the development of poor self-concept (Werner, 1984; Federlein, 1984; Hymes, 1964; Gillespie, 1984, Elkind, 1982). (Program Improvement Plan, 1988)

I take exception with some of the interpretations of the research cited there, but those difficulties aside, the view expressed is that "the literature" on educating young children is in agreement about the need for the DAP policy. Barritt and Marshall (1992) point out that,."Educators often cite 'what we know' on the basis of what is known via 'the literature'." As researchers and educators themselves, they add, "We have witnessed the ways in which such references close down discussions rather than open them up" (p. 4). The version of research found most consistently in research journals is "one that sees research as the search for facts and truths about classrooms, teaching, children, learning, and the conditions necessary to ensure success" (p. 10). However, they know few researchers who continue to accept as either possible or desirable the separation of the knower from the known and even fewer who see themselves "as searching for Truth" (p. 11, emphasis in original).

Barritt and Marshall would like to view research as a rhetorical process, as texts created by authors who make choices about how to present what they have learned and what parts to share of all that was learned. This is difficult for many to do or accept, because it is the research form which identifies the profession and is controlled by a "very narrow view of science." Those who know how the form works and can cite "the literature" belong to "the hierarchies of expertise and can call themselves professionals" (p. 15). They point out that relying on "the literature," however, ignores the relationship between educational researchers and the people who cite it. They contrast the statement "to know" in the natural sciences where it makes sense to say we know about genes based on the "the literature" and in education where researchers study human lives so "it seems at least an overstatement to suggest that those who speak with the authority of research are the only ones with the authority 'to know.'"

> Saying that "the literature" represents what "we know" suggests that other knowledge is part of the unknown. It suggests that "the literature" is the background of certainty against which the uncertainties of ordinary, daily life are seen. (p. 15)

Donald Schön (1983) supports this contention when he says that the university and thus, researchers, are committed to a "*particular* epistemology, a view of knowledge that fosters selective inattention to practical competence and professional artistry" (p. vii, emphasis in original). Thus the profession elevates its forms of knowing and separates itself from other educators - teachers and parents.

Magda Lewis and Roger Simon (1986) point out, however, that it is not the theories or the literature itself which serve to oppress voices, it is people.

> To the extent that academic discourse appears objective and distances (and is understood and privileged in this way) it becomes a vehicle for domination. It devalues alternative perspectives, understanding, and articulation of experience. It denies the lived reality of difference as the ground on which to pose questions of theory and practice. It favors one set of values over others as they are generated by the multiplicity of human experiences. (p. 469)

Lewis and Simon agree with Barritt and Marshall in that one way to remove part of the separation is to include students, teachers, parents, and others who are concerned about education to "be part of the profession's discussions" (p. 16).

Seymour Sarason (1990) submits that inattention to power relationships such as that between "the literature" and practitioners, and between researcher knowledge and teacher knowledge, is one major reason why educational systems have been "intractable" to reform.

> There is, I have come to conclude, a ubiquitous feature of complex human systems that should inform thinking and action in regard to educational reform. It is a feature that, if not taken seriously, invites failure. This is the fact that any social system can be described in terms of power relationships. Power is distributed unequally among the members of the system, and there is always a rationale for this unequal distribution of power. (p. 27)

The designation of those who have the power to "know" from those who must take that knowledge is but one kind of power relationship Sarason recognizes; however, he says that "any effort to deal with or prevent a significant problem in a school system that is not based on a reallocation of power - a discernible change in power relationships - is doomed" (p. 28).

The Chadwick administrators would not believe that this power dominance was representative of their views. They thought that by providing a framework with the DAP policy, teachers would be empowered to work it out for themselves, to reflect on how to implement the practices in their own classrooms. They wanted teachers to apply their intelligence, judgment, and experience to the ways in which they implemented the appropriate practices. However, the form of "intellectual labor" required was unavailable to teachers because the problem for which DAP was the answer was decided by the policymakers and the intensity of the work required to put this answer into place in a short amount of time short circuited such intellectualizing. This situation resulted in the perception that policymakers, in fact, devalued the necessity "of critical intellectual work" and placed most value on "the primacy of practical considerations" (Giroux, 1986, p. 34). The administrators thought they were giving teachers the power to decide, but the important decisions were made by "experts removed from the context of classrooms" (p. 33). Teachers, who had felt controlled and confined with the textbook mandate and the Madeline Hunter instruction model of the previous policies, were pleased at first with the freedom the DAP policy seemed to provide for them. It did not take long, however, for people to realize that the bureaucratic controls were still in place even though the technical aspects had changed. In place of textbooks and EEEI, their teaching was to become the application of research-based "appropriate" methods to teach a curriculum which "was in place." According to Giroux (1986) the consequence of policy, such as Chadwick's based on NAEYC guidelines and the mandated curriculum, was that "decisions over what counts as knowledge, as well as the form that knowledge takes within specific academic disciplines is removed from the collective influence of teachers themselves" (p. 35).

Harste, Woodward, and Burke (1984), wrote of a view of theory when they examined theoretical and methodological issues surrounding literacy research and instruction and reflecting on their changes in thinking on the way to "knowing." They understood the need to base their work upon existing beliefs and theories about language, but learned the importance of "methodological stances where reflexivity and self-correction is possible" (p. 84). They recognized "discernible psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic universals in the processes involved in language use and language learning" (p. 105); however, their work with the children opened new understandings and new questions about the notion of differences between strategies employed by children and adults. Teachers in Chadwick also raised such questions about their observations of students. For example, teachers found discrepancies between what the Curriculum Guide listed as attributes for various "literacy levels" and what the children actually did. In our conversations, however, the teachers attributed those mismatches to their own inadequacies with identification rather than to raise questions about the literacy level designations themselves.

Ann Berthoff (1987) also asks teachers to work out their own theory in dialogue with each other. She dismisses the direct application in classrooms of such research as that supported by the National Institute for Education (NIE) saying that teachers must formulate their own questions in ways which unite theory and practice together. She said, "I want to claim that what we need is not what is called 'research,' but the kind of theory that is generated in dialogue among teachers" (p. 29). Teacher dialogue is the way, in Berthoff's view, to begin with theory and practice together, and to allow us to judge if what we meant to do is matched by what we did. "How can we know what we're doing; how can we find out where we're going, if we don't have a conception of what we think we're doing?" (p. 30) She does not dismiss theory, but seems to follow the notions presented by Harste et al. that "theory gives us perspective" (p. 32) and allows us a place to start from as we learn.

The reliance on "the literature" and research as an end-point in discussion served to successfully quiet most voices of dissent or question. Some teachers felt free to dismiss the research as being done by those who do not know their classrooms and do not know what teachers experience every day. Other teachers felt that if the research says that this is what they must do to provide better learning opportunities for young children, then they must try to do what is asked without question - "Who are we in the face of such experts?" Their expressions of doubt and anxiety were generally directed inwardly - "What am I doing wrong?" - rather than at questions related to the advisability of the philosophy or the appropriateness of the practices. Relying on expert knowledge encouraged them to dismiss various aspects of the policy, to embrace them without reflection, or to attempt to show that the experts were wrong.

Uncertainty - The issue of voice

The role of "the literature" in presenting certainty amidst day-to-day teaching and the many anxieties and uncertainties expressed by many of the educators who talked with me is highlighted by Joseph McDonald (1992). He says that "chief among the conspirators of certainty are the entrepreneurs of school improvement" who proclaim to have good ideas, but the ideas are fixed. "Just teach *what we say* and *as we* *say*, argue these entrepreneurs, and all the ambiguities of your worklife will disappear like so many vapors clouding the real thing" (p. 2, emphasis in original). Research-to-practice initiatives give teachers an inappropriate sense of certainty about their work. He says, "Whenever they teach, teachers must to some extent swallow the uncertainty they feel, believe wholeheartedly in their goals and efforts, even though riddled by doubt" (pp. 5-6).

Donald Schön (1983) adds to the discussion about uncertainty when he writes that competent practitioners usually know more than they can say and as a result, they inflate the dichotomy between the "hard" knowledge of university science and scholarship and the "soft" knowledge of "artistry and unvarnished opinion" (p. viii). When we rely on "hard" knowledge or expert advice as the primary basis for our teaching, our insecurities are magnified. However, Schön and others have come to realize that, "The situations of practice are not problems to be solved but problematic situations characterized by uncertainty, disorder and indeterminacy" (pp. 15-16).

Instead of relying on expert advice which seems so clear and clean and which leads teachers to believe they must be doing something wrong when things do not work out so well, McDonald believes that "an honest accounting of the uncertainties in the craft of teaching can help open those doors, encourage collegiality and experimentation, and promote an ethos of continuous rather than periodic or sporadic improvement" (p. 8).

The DAP policy attempted a difficult kind of reform - one designed to change teaching practices and classroom routines, but it did not, in McDonald's words, fully "acknowledge the uncertainty of teaching" (1992, p. 7). Teachers felt that they had to present a confident picture to their administrators and parents and yet worried that what they were doing was really going to help students and they worried that they might not be up to the tasks or that they would not recognize students who needed more support and therefore, they might not make optimal growth in learning. One way to acknowledge this uncertainty, McDonald says, is to listen carefully to the voices of teachers.

The implementation process of the DAP policy, however, limited the ability of policymakers to attend to the voices of the teachers. The press of time to get the practices into use worked against offering the teachers a dialogic way of thinking about and learning about either the theories and philosophy upon which the policy was based or about the practices which were viewed as "appropriate." The ways in which the policy was implemented silenced voices of uncertainty rather than allowing them to be heard. As opposed to "honoring the skeptic" as one principal requested, only those who felt confident and agreed with the philosophy were allowed to voice their views in sanctioned ways. Teachers and principals felt silenced when they attempted to ask questions or express concerns. Parents were allowed to vent their anger at School Board meetings, but instead of being provided with a forum for discussion as they requested, they were patronized with lectures about the values of the practices - whole language, in particular. Teachers who supported the policy and who might have shared their own initial and continuing uncertainties were also silenced when their colleagues expressed outrage about the external control over their teaching - again. The questions which were allowed to be raised always centered on the "what" and the "how" of the policy. Questions such as "Why?" and "What if it is otherwise?" (Church, 1992, p. 242) were not entertained. We provided no role for and could find no value in our dissenters.

In his study of teacher responses to reform efforts to restructure schools, Andy Hargreaves (1994) was especially concerned with the issue of voice. He suggests

> that teachers' voices and experiences should be understood not in terms of romantic and gratuitous celebrations of the teachers' craft or of missionary

> commitments to building and justifying teachers' professionalism, but in terms of the real contexts of how teachers' voice and experiences are actually developed and used. (p. 2)

The teachers and principals who talked with me did not speak with one voice. Some voices expressed a history of resistance in a variety of forms. Other voices were passive and others were resistant to change. The viewpoints expressed by my colleagues reflected the range evidenced in Joyce Antler and Sari Knopp Biklen's collected stories of women attempting *Change in Education* (1990). Some of the women were active agents of change, some were conservators actively resisting change, and others saw themselves as victims of change.

When we don't recognize that there are multiple voices, we expect that everyone understands the efforts for change and the process of change in the same way. Marjorie Roemer (1991) found in her work with English teachers trying to reform the teaching of writing, which, like the DAP policy, had "teacher discovery and negotiation at the heart of it," that it took her and her colleagues "a long time to realize that not all of us had understood the project in this way" (p. 441). This was because, also like our Chadwick experience, they "never spoke about our individual values as teachers, what we wanted to preserve, protect, or foster, or what we hoped to improve" (p. 441).

Inattention to the role of dialogue was evident in the district's view of empowerment. The Chadwick Central Office administrators felt that they were empowering the kindergarten, first, and second grade teachers to decide for themselves how to implement the "appropriate practices." However, many of the teachers did not feel empowered. Roger Simon (1992) wrote that when the term empowerment is used in education, it is a response to unjust relations which have previously constrained people from equal participation in a group or community. "To empower in this perspective is to counter the power of some people or groups to make others 'mute.' To empower is to enable those who have been silenced to speak" (p. 143). Many of the participants in my study, however, felt as if they had been made mute by a new group of people designated as "the privileged"/"the competent" (p. 143).

Contradictions with whole language

Many teachers did not feel empowered because they, at some level, recognized the contradictions between what the district was telling them to do for their students and what the district was doing to them as they worked within the organization. This recognition was not always consciously expressed, but manifested itself in the ways in which some of the teachers resisted the policy and ways in which teachers who supported the policy felt silenced and betrayed.

One aspect of the betrayal was found in the varying understandings of whole language. The district defined whole language in terms of a method of instructing young children to read based upon the way young children learn to talk and understand language. Many teachers agreed, and perhaps areas of agreement such as this were what allowed them to feel aligned with the policy in general. The appropriate practices designated for whole language centered on "strategies for first attempting reading," "using literature to teach skills," "helping students set purposes for reading," and so on. To many of the teachers who were viewed as the "grass-roots" support, whole language also has a political nature. The whole language philosophy that they embraced and which they had assumed was part of DAP is a direct challenge not only to the ways language arts was traditionally taught, but also to the ways in which children and adults are treated in schools. The district had jumped on the "whole language bandwagon" and many teachers claimed that they had become whole language teachers because they now use "big books," "teach skills in context," or have a "literature-based approach."

In an attempt to describe what makes whole language different as a view of teaching and learning, Carole Edelsky, Bess Altwerger, and Barbara Flores (1991), wrote that some school districts have done much the same thing with whole language as they did in the mid-1970s when open education was distorted so that "open space was substituted for openness of ideas, learning centers for learning-centeredness" (p. 2). These districts tend to adopt the whole language label without understanding that it is "*profoundly* different from pre-dominant views about education" - something that creates backlash and confusions (p. 3, emphasis in original).

> The best defense against being distorted as a trendy new method, being misrepresented by opponents, and being co-opted by publishers wanting to cash in on a market is knowledgeable teachers. Knowledgeable teachers are also the center of a strong movement. By knowledgeable teachers we mean teachers who know about the language and learning theory behind their holistic preferences, who develop an articulate, coherent framework, who measure their practice against that underlying theoretical framework, and who, as a result, claim full status as professionals... (p. 3)

According to Edelsky et al., whole language teaching does not mean checking off a list of supposedly whole language activities (which Chadwick teachers were asked to do for the grade level evaluations of DAP), rather it is "the teacher's stated beliefs, the character of classroom interaction, and the teachers' and students' underlying intentions." It is "the *deliberately* theory-driven practice - not simply the behaviors - that make a classroom whole language" (p. 7, emphasis in original).

One key whole language belief is that reading and writing are learned by really reading and writing, not through drills and exercises; and therefore, reading and writing should be what goes on in schools. When basing teaching on whole language, teachers do not rely on texts designed for "instructional purposes," but use genuine texts - children's literature, songs, poems, recipes, directions. The difference between really reading and writing and doing exercises centers on purpose and meaning. In contrast, the staff development opportunities for DAP focused on making learning fun and providing more engaging activities and being sure to tell children the purposes for the reading and writing they did, but questions about "Which purposes?" and "Whose purposes are served?" and "Which meanings are emphasized?" were not addressed. Exercises, as such, have no intrinsic meaning or purpose for the student (Edelsky et al., 1991, pp. 8-9).[3] When there was no discussion as to why workbooks and skill practice sheets were not appropriate for young children, teachers were able to create artificial exercises which they thought were appropriate because they were based on the literature provided.

The district truly wanted teachers to change their practices, but the dialogue was limited to "doing it right" which silenced many of those the policy was meant to empower. As whole language became co-opted by the DAP policy, the political aspects were removed and it became simply a more appropriate way to teach strategies. However, even those "non-political" whole language tenets which teachers were to institute in their classrooms were not modeled in the learning opportunities the district provided for the teachers. Classroom strategies became so paramount that many did not come to fully understand the concept of literacy which was foundational.

---

[3] There are many resources available for a more thorough understanding of whole language. Some of the most helpful to me have been the following: Brian Cambourne (1988) *The Whole Story. Natural Learning and the Acquisition of Literacy in the Classroom;* Courtney Cazden (1992) *Whole Language Plus. Essays on Literacy in the United States and New Zealand;* Carole Edelsky (1991) *With Literacy and Justice for All;* Donald Graves (1991) *Build a Literate Classroom;* Judith Newman (Ed.) (1985) *Whole Language Theory in Use;* Constance Weaver (1990) *Understanding Whole Language From Principles to Practice.*

For example, some teachers worried that many of the DAP practices would not "work" for all of their students and, in fact, tried to demonstrate that their students were not as successful with the new practices. These were often teachers in schools which had large populations of low socioeconomic families and their concerns (when heard at all) were much like those expressed by Lisa Delpit (1988) who felt that minority children were being ill-served by liberal white teachers employing whole language and process writing. Delpit said that educators were ignoring the opinions and questions of minority teachers who wondered about the adequacy of the process approach. When I first read Delpit's opinions, I wanted to dismiss them as misinterpretations of what classrooms like mine were attempting to accomplish. However, as I continued to read and when I had opportunities to work in urban, predominantly African-American contexts, I was able to better understand her concerns. The assumption that people who questioned simply did not know enough or had misunderstood was also evident in Chadwick. Delpit's recommendation to those in our situation may have eased some of our learning difficulties: "Both sides do need to be able to listen, and I contend that it is those with the most power, those in the majority, who must take the greater responsibility for initiating the process" (p. 297).

Ideas about the political aspects of whole language were not included in the concept of whole language made explicit by the policy, nor were they what most people talked to me about in our conversations, but as teachers talked about what they liked about the new approaches for their children and for themselves, it was clear that whole language did center on the character of classroom interaction and did mean changing the environment for learning. Many teachers found that when they changed some practices, they were able to see their children differently and had more opportunity to learn from the children about what was appropriate for them. We just never got beyond surface issues in the district to find out what we really did mean.

The DAP policy was an attempt to improve learning for children; however, the view of "improve" was based on the national reports which want the children to achieve in competition with students in other countries and to maintain the U.S. superiority in the international marketplace. It was not a "pedagogy of possibility" either for the children or for the adults who were to teach them. No one was invited or permitted to question "relations of power," "forms of knowledge," nor "to envisage versions of a world which is 'not yet.'" And rather than demand to place these issues on the table for discussion, teachers became angry with the work overload and complained about being told how to teach, or simply kept quietly doing their own thing in their classrooms - perhaps not fully realizing the source of their irritation. If they could have been empowered in the ways Simon outlines, if they could have had dialogues in which all voices could have been heard, if they could have had forums for their uncertainties, concerns and questions about their teaching and about the ways they felt powerless in the district's bureaucratic hierarchy, then perhaps they would have uncovered some of the roots of resistance and continued the grass-roots efforts, helping each other learn "to teach against the grain"[4] (Cochran-Smith, 1991) and move toward what might have been a pedagogy for empowerment. Instead, many teachers floundered among misconceptions about meaning and about how to implement the mandates of the policy or dug in their heels and decided to wait until this latest reform moved on with its predecessors.

It must be noted that the Central Office administrators were aware of the rhetoric on the need for teachers to talk with each other and to have time to learn new teaching practices. Networks were set up by Hazel Brown which combined grade level teachers from three schools. However, these networks were assigned pairings, had voluntary attendance, were held after school hours without funds available to help teachers pay for the additional child-care required for their own children, and the first few meetings of such networks had lengthy district agenda items which virtually eliminated any possibility for teachers to discuss their own concerns or interests. Subsequent meetings were not restricted to assigned topics, but by that time many teachers were choosing not to participate. The well-intentioned networks had all the attributes of what Andy Hargreaves (1991) describes as "contrived collegiality." The purpose of this kind of collaboration is "less of evolutionary teacher development, than of implementing system initiatives..." (p. 24). What he would recommend to support teacher learning are "collaborative cultures." These relatively rare occurrences comprise "more spontaneous, informal and pervasive collaborative working relationships among teachers which are both social and task-oriented in nature" (p. 24). Some individual schools did arrange ways for teachers to meet using funds from their "School Improvement Plans" to pay for substitutes while teachers participated in "peer coaching" or held discussions on "approved topics."[5] Principals often tried to structure the schedule of special classes such as art, music, and physical education so that teachers at a grade level could meet. However, teachers then traded their forty-five minutes of time to prepare materials and deal with a few of the many things they needed to do in order to meet together. The press of the work sabotaged even the best efforts of principals to provide time for the teachers to talk together.

Resisting the policy or the power?

Another unintended consequence of the policy had to do with the resistance displayed in both overtly and subtly. Teachers found ways to do the practices on their own terms, often to the dismay of other teachers who thought of themselves as "truly whole language" or "really developmental." What seemed to be resistance as result of a lack of understanding or disagreement with the intent of the policy may have been a product of the intensity of the work or the result of uneven relations of power. There were times as I was talking with teachers in our interviews or when I encountered them in district meetings when I felt that some chose to not teach certain things so that DAP would fail and they could say, "See, I told you those so-called experts don't know what they are talking about." I had a difficult time understanding why a teacher would think it was acceptable to not teach letter/sound associations, for example. I can't know if such decisions were based upon misunderstanding about the meaning of the policy or upon the power struggle over who decides what a teacher does in her own classroom. Michael Apple (1986) has spent a lot to time learning about teachers and our work and provides some important insights about how this resistance might come about. He submits that a process of "proletarianization" has had the consistent effect of providing teachers with little control over their work. This process has increasingly restructured teachers' jobs whereby teachers are "deskilled" by the encroachment of technological control procedures such as management systems and pre-specified teaching competencies and procedures in much the same way Shannon (1989) described in regard to the basal reading materials. Deskilling, according to Apple and Teitelbaum (1986) happens when skills which teachers have developed over years atrophy and are replaced with those needed for managing the new procedures. The opposite of proletarianized work is professional work - that which requires individual judgment and independence in making job decisions (Tabakin and Densmore, 1986). Many teachers had learned the skills of textbook management very well and they saw that their students successfully learned the concepts and could pass the tests. They had been reskilled in learning those management techniques. DAP was removing the use of those skills as a basis for instruction and may teachers resisted such an intrusion.

---

[4] Marilyn Cochran-Smith (1991) used this phrase to talk about a way to reform teaching. It is based on Antonio Gramsci's (1916/1977) argument that "action is everyone's responsibility and that each individual, no matter how apparently powerless, was accountable for the role he played or failed to play in the larger political struggle" (p. 279). Cochran-Smith contends the most powerful way for new teachers to learn to "teach against the grain" is to work with experienced teachers who are struggling reformers in their own classrooms.

[5] When teachers wanted to arrange for substitute teachers for their classrooms in order to talk with each other, the topics for discussion had to be submitted in advance to Central Office for approval. Approved topics were those listed on the individual school's "Improvement Plan." Therefore, if teachers wanted to talk about literacy assessment and their school did not specify this topic on the School Improvement Plan (determined in the previous school year) they could not get approval for substitutes.

It might seem that the DAP policy was attempting to move toward professionalism for the teachers and away from the technological controls of basal publishers, but it became obvious that other prescribed competencies and procedures simply took the place of teachers' manuals, texts, and end of book tests. Also, the bureaucratic controls embodied in the "hierarchical social relations of the workplace" (Apple, 1983, p. 147) were still very much in place and even though they were less visible, they exhibited their presence in teacher frustration and resistance. Tabakin and Densmore found that for teachers, the organization of work activities is often essentially coercive in that they are presented with "what appear to be real choices," but these are "actually insignificant in substance and narrowly confined" (1986, p. 261). In order for the school system to run well, as with many social institutions, "critical reflection is actively discouraged" (p. 261). Furthermore, as the teachers who had used basals and relied on the tests were forced to use other methods to teach and assess, they were at a loss about how to do that. The type of deskilling and reskilling which had occurred as they used the commercial materials made their implementation of the DAP policy much more challenging. The skills they now needed had either never been developed or were forgotten.

Apple maintains that women are more likely to be proletarianized than are men. Teaching is seen as women's work (Apple, 1985). He says that sexist practices in recruitment and promotion and a general tendency to care less about the working conditions of women feed the proletarianization process. This was certainly supported by the anecdotal information provided by my participants and the difficulties elementary teachers had in getting their own union members to support better working conditions for them. Although schools are organized around male leadership, Apple reports that teachers have carved out small places of power and control to gain autonomy in our own classrooms. An example of attempts to make inroads into the control of classrooms is seen in the many science and math materials and programs created in the aftermath of Sputnik in the 1950s and 1960s when there was increased pressure to standardize and legitimate content based upon professional materials developed by experts. Apple said, "It is the history of the state, in concert with capital and a largely male academic body of consultants and developers, intervening at the level of practice into the work of a largely female workforce" (pp. 36-37). It was not unusual, however, for such improvements as "new math" and "new science" to be taught in much the same way as the old. They became altered to fit into the existing practices which teachers had found successful. While many policy analysts blamed slow-to-change bureaucracies or conservatism by teachers and administrators, Apple looked at the minimal changes in structural terms and in labor process and gender terms. "The supposed immobility of the institution, its lack of significant change in the face of initial onslaught of such materials, is at least partly tied to the resistance of a female workforce against external incursions into the practices they had evolved over years of labor" (p. 38). He admonished that while schools are state apparatuses and suffer the pressure to act in certain ways, especially in times of crisis, we should not expect the people within the schools to be passive followers of policies laid down from above.

Reformers have tried to legitimate educational intervention by appealing to a research base and to rationalize teaching with standardized, based-on-theory practices which has not always had the results anticipated. One reason, according to Apple (1986) is the intensification of teachers' work which often accompanies such intervention. The symptoms of intensification include no time to relax or to go to the bathroom and having total absence of time to keep up with one's field. Apple contends intensification is mental labor in the chronic sense of work overload that has escalated over time. He says that it destroys sociability. "Community tends to be redefined around the needs of the labor process. And, since both time and interaction are at a premium, the risk of isolation grows" (p. 42). The intellectual deskilling also involves being cut off from one's field which leads to relying more and more heavily on ideas and processes provided by experts. The DAP policy carried a heavy load of new work for most teachers.

It is important to understand, however, that not all of the intensification came from the district policymakers. Andy Hargreaves (1991) found in his study of a group of Canadian teachers' use of preparation time that,

> Many of the pressing demands and expectations of teaching often seemed to come from within the teachers themselves. So many teachers appeared to drive themselves with almost merciless enthusiasm and commitment in an attempt to meet the virtually unattainable standards of pedagogical perfection they set themselves. (p. 11)

Hargreaves' view is that much intensification in teachers' work comes from within themselves. Many of the teachers, and I think I would fall into this category myself, certainly put pressure on themselves. However, the pressure would have been much less if we had not been asked to see ourselves in a mirror of such perfection as the DAP policy seemed to hold.

I do not want to romanticize the roles resistance and intellectualizing play in the everyday lives of elementary school teachers. Most of my colleagues did not see themselves as resisters and although they wanted time to meet and talk with each other, they would not identify this need as one to clarify beliefs or plan political action. Apple (1986) understands that resistance is not necessarily an indication of a progressive stance on the part of teachers. He did say, however, that only as we "uncover the contradictions within and between the dynamics of the labor process and gender can we begin to see what effect such resistances may actually have" (p. 50). He explained,

> It is by showing the sometimes complimentary and sometimes contradictory interconnections between class and gender, between paid and unpaid work, between home and school, that the real positions of teachers can be found.

> And it is by showing how these are embodied not in structures, but in agents, in real teachers with real hopes, dreams, fears and material circumstances ...that possibilities for democratic action can be known. Only there can we truly identify what is progressive or not about any particular stance. (p. 188)

As teachers begin to recognize that the anger they feel has something to do with "the degenerating conditions of their labor" (p. 193), they may also begin to realize that through dialogue with their colleagues and working together, they can bring about changes for themselves and for the children they teach.

The DAP policy mandated that all kindergarten, first, and second grade teachers employ practices which had been identified by national organizations as appropriate for young children and which reflected current translations of research into practice. Because some district teachers already displayed these practices and embraced a constructivist, child-centered, whole language philosophy, the policy was said to arise from the practice of teaching as well as from a research base. The policymakers wanted teachers to be professional decision makers and implement the tenets of the policy in their own ways in their own classrooms - to construct their interpretation of the practices in much the same ways they were to offer constructivist learning to their students and in much the same ways the grass-roots teachers had done for themselves. While some of the intended goals of the policy were manifested, there was also teacher resistance and fear that students would not learn as well as they had previously. Without providing learning opportunities for teachers amidst work which became increasingly intensified and which required skills which many teachers had either lost during the deskilling era of the textbook mandates or had never developed, teachers either tried to make drastic changes and learn the practices in a very short time while also attempting to deal with their anxieties and concerns or wholly or partially resisted the practices as another infringement on their professional rights. Teachers who favored the policy as well as those who questioned it felt silenced. Many teachers understood that their uncertainty was viewed as either resistance or ignorance which also served to silence them. The unexamined questions about who has the power to determine classroom practices created an undercurrent of power struggles.

The grass-roots teachers had demonstrated that it is possible to reform teaching by working together with thoughtful colleagues. It is possible to have reflective conversations about teaching and learning which provide support for ongoing professional growth. However, when this kind of constructivist learning process is taken over by policy makers and changed in a way which attempts to simply transmit the information from one group to another, the learning suffers. It becomes just another example of mandating "expert advice and external standards" (Elmore and McLaughlin, 1988, p. 4) and trying to use research to "persuade teachers to do things differently" (Kennedy, 1997, p. 6). The "steady work" required for true reform centers on opportunities for educators to have the time and space to come together around the problems and celebrations of teaching and learning. While the California Reading Initiative folks, much like the policymakers in Chadwick, believe that there is "uncommon consensus" that a "change of course in the teaching of reading has occurred" (California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 1996, p. v), Donald Holdaway shared a different view of how children approach literacy which can also apply to teacher learning as well:

> We have seen that the search for THE way in which children should be taught is a falsifying exercise. Children approach literacy by many different paths in the same way as they approach learning to talk by many different paths. All the paths they do follow successfully are purposeful and meaning-

> oriented, winding through the terrain around the obstacles in intelligent and personal ways. The terrain is different for each learner. ...Any approach to literacy must allow the individual learners to pick their own way - always in the company of guiding and sustaining friends. (1979, p. 191)

There will never be one way to learn - for the children or for ourselves. Teachers who are engaged in continuous reflection about teaching and learning can provide important insights about those various paths children take as they approach their learning. As a result, educational reform can emerge, not occurring in huge waves, but as a well spring of ongoing contributions.

Bibliography

Adams, Marilyn Jagger (1990). *Beginning to Read: Thinking and Learning about Print.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Antler, Joyce and Sari Knopp Biklen (Eds.) (1990). *Change in Education: Women as Radicals and Conservators.* Albany, NY: State Unversity of New York Press.

Apple, Michael (1983). Curricular Form and the Logic of Technical Control. In Apple, M. W. and L. Weis (Eds.) *Ideology and Practice in Schooling.* (pp. 143 - 165). Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Apple, Michael (1985). Teaching and "Women's Work": A Comparative Historical and Ideological Analysis. *Teachers College Record* 86 (3), 455-473.

Apple, Michael(1986). *Teachers and Texts. A Political ecomony of class and gender relations in education.* New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Apple, Michael and Kenneth Teitelbaum (1986). Are teachers losing control of their skills and curriculum? *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 18 (2), 177-184.

Barritt, Loren S. and Margaret J. Marshall (1992). "The Literature" in the Crafting of a Profession. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, CA.

Berthoff, Ann E. (1987). The Teacher as REsearcher. In D. Goswami & P.R. Stillman (Eds.) *Reclaiming the Classroom. Teacher Research as an Agency for Change.* (pp. 28-39). Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook Publishers.

Bredekamp, S. (1987). *Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs serving children from birth through age 8.* Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Bredekamp, S. (1988) NAEYC Position Statement on Developmentally Appropriate Practice in the Primary Grades, Serving 5- Through 8-Year Olds. *Young Children.*

[Brown, Hazel] (1991) [Chadwick] Schools K - 2 Developmentally Appropriate Practices Report. Report prepared for the Board of Education, June 24, 1991.

[Brown, Hazel and John Ryan] (1991). Report on the Developmental Program. Summary of Staff Discussions. Prepared for the [Chadwick] Public Schools.

California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (1996). *Teaching Reading. A Balanced, Comprehensive Approach to Teaching Reading in Prekindergarten through grade three.* Sacramento, CA: California State Board of Education.

Cambourne, Brian (1988). *The Whole Story. Natural Learning and the Acquisition of Literacy in the Classroom.* New York, NY: Scholastic, Inc.

Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession (1986). *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century.* Washington, DC: Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy.

Cazden, Courtney (1992). *Whole Language Plus. Essays on Literacy in the United States and New Zealand.* New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Chadwick Administrative Intern Program (Spring, 1985). Notebook provided by the Division of Instruction.

[Chadwick] School Board Workshop (May 17, 1993). Presentation Material and Supporting Documentation.

Church, Susan M. (1992). Rethinking Whole Language: The Politics of Educational Change. In P. Shannon (Ed.) *Becoming Political. Readings and Writings in the Politics of Literacy Education.* (pp. 238 - 249. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Cochran-Smith, Marilyn (1991). Learning to Teach against the Grain. *Harvard Educational Review* 61 (3), 279 -310.

Cohen, David (1987). Educational Technology, Policy, and Practice. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis,* 9 (2), pp. 153-170.

Cohen, David and Carol A. Barnes (1993a). Pedagogy and Policy. In D.K. Cohen, M.W. McLaughlin, and J.E. Talbert (Eds.) *Teaching for Understanding.* (pp. 207-239). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers

Cohen, David and Carol A. Barnes (1993b). Conclusion: A New Pedagogy for Policy? In D.K. Cohen, MW. McLaughlin and J.E. Talbert (Eds.) *Teaching for Understanding* (pp. 240-275). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Cuban, L. (1984). How did teachers teach, 1890-1980. *Theory into Practice,* 22 (3), 159-165.

Cuban, L. (1986) Persistent Instruction: Another Look at Constancy in the Classroom. *Phi Delta Kappan*

Cuban, L. (1990). Reforming again, again, and again. *Educational Researchers,* 19 (1), 3-13.

Darling-Hammond, L. (1990). Instructional policy into practice: "The power of the bottom over the top." *Educcational Evaluation and Policy Analysis,* 12 (3), 233-241.

Delpit, Lisa (1988). The Silenced Dialogue: Power and Pedagogy in Educating Other People's Children. *Harvard Educational Review* 58, 280-298.

Edelsky, Carole (1991). *With Literacy and Justice for All. Rethinking the Social in Language and Education.* Bristol, PA: The Falmer Press.

Edelsky, Carole, Bess Altwerger, and Barbara Flores (1991). *Whole Language. What's the Difference?* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Elmore, Richard F. and Milbrey W. McLaughlin (1988). *Steady Work. Policy, Practice, and the Reform of American Education.* Santa Monica, CA: The Rand Corporation.

Engleby, David (1986). Development in Social Context. In M. Richards and P. Light (Eds.) *Children and Social Worlds - Development in a Social Context.* (pp. 297-317). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

First Grade Curriculum Guide (1989). First grade Early Childhood Committee. Chadwick Community Schools.

First Year Assessment of Kindergarten Developmental Curriculum (1989) "Chadwick School District", June.

Fullan, Michael & S. Stiegelbauer (1991). *The New Meaning of Educational Change*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Futrell, Mary Hatwood (1989). Mission Not Accomplished: Education Reform in Retrospect. *Phi Delta Kappan* 71 (1), 8-14.

Giroux, Henry A. (1986). Curriculum. Teaching, and the Resisting Intellectual. *Curriculum and Teaching,* 1 (1), 33-42).

Gramsci, Antonio (1916/1977). Indifference. In Q. Hoare (Ed.), *Antonio Gramsci: Selections from political writings 1910 - 1920* (pp. 17-18). London: Lawrence and Wishart.

Graves, Donald (1991). *Build a Literate Classroom.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Hargreaves, Andy (1991). Prepare to Meet They Mood?: Teacher Preparation Time and the Intensification Thesis. Paper presented at the Annual Conference of The American Educational Research Association in Chicago, IL.

Hargreaves, Andy (1994). Dissonant Voices: Teachers and the Multiple Realities of Restructuring. Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the American Educational Research Association in New Orleans, LA

Harste, Jerome C., Virginia A. Woodward, Carolyn L. Burke (1984). Examining our Assumptions: A Transactional view of Literacy and Learning. *Research in the Teaching of English* 18 (1), 84 - 108.

Hatch, J. Amos and Evelyn B. Freeman (1988). Who's Pushing Whom? Stress and Kindergarten. *Phi Delta Kappan,* 70 (2), 145-147.

Holdaway, Don (1979). *The Foundations of Literacy.* New York, NY: Ashton Scholastic.

Holmes Group (1986). *Tomorrow's Teachers.* East Lansing, MI: The Holmes Group.

Huberman, M. & Miles, M. (1984). *Innovation up close.* New York: Plenum.

Hudson, Samuel (1986). *Michigan's Tenth Largest. [Chadwick] Community School District 1830-1986.* [Chadwick]: [Chadwick] Community School District.

Ilg, Frances (1965). *Scoring Notes: The Developmental Examination.* 1982 revision by Jan Keirns and Shari Iba. New Haven, CN: The Gesell Institute.

Kennedy, Mary (1997). The Connection Between Research and Practice. *Educational Researcher, 26* (7), 4 - 12.

LaFontaine, Jean (1986). An Anthropological Perspective on Children in Social Worlds. In M. Richards and P. Light (Eds.) *Children and Social Worlds - Development in a Social Context* (pp. 1-30). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Langer, Judith (1991). Literacy and Schooling: A Sociocognitive Perspective. In E.H. Hiebert (Ed.) *Literacy for a Diverse Society..* (pp. 9-27). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Lewis, Magda and Roger I. Simon (1986). A Discourse Not Intended for Her: Learning and Teaching Within Partriarchy. *Harvard Educational Review* 56 (4), 457-472.

Mallory, Brude and Rebecca New (Eds.) (1994). *Diversity & Developmentally Appropriate Practices. Challenges for Early Childhood Education.* New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

McDonald, Joseph P. (1986). Raising the teacher's voice and the ironic role of theory. *Harvard Educational Review* 56 (4), 355-378.

National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983). *A Nation at Risk.* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Newman, Judith (Ed.) (1985). *Whole Language Theory in Use.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Odden, Allan (1991). New Patterns of Education Policy Implementation and Challenges for the 1990s. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association in April, 1991 in Chicago, Illinois.

Program Improvement Plan (1988). Proposal presented to the Chadwick Board of Education, Chadwick Community Schools.

Roemer, Marjorie Godlin (1991). What We Talk about When We Talk about School Reform. *Harvard Educational Review* 61 (4), 434-448.

Sarason, Seymour B. (1990). *The Predictable Failure of Educational Reform.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Schön, Donald A. (1983). *The Reflective Practitioner. How Professionals Think in Action.* New York: Basic Books, Inc.

Shannon, Patrick (1989). *Broken Promises.* Boston, MA: Bergin & Garvey Publishers, Inc.

Simon, Roger (1992). Empowerment as a Pedagogy of Possibility. In P. Shannon (Ed.) *Becoming Political. Readings and Writings in the Politics of Literacy Education.* (pp. 139-151). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Tabakin, Geoffrey and Kathleen Densmore (1986). Teacher Professionalization and Gender Analysis. *Teachers College Record* 88 (2), 257-279.

The Township News (1990c). Letter charges 'teacher dissent' over program. *"The Township News",* October 31, p. 1.

Weaver, Constance (1990). *Understanding Whole Language From Principles to Practice.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Wimplelberg, R.K., & Boyd, W.L. (1988). "Directed Autonomy in an Age of Educational Reform." Paper.

Wixson, Karen, Charles Peters, Elaine Weber, Edward Roeber (1987). New directions in statewide testing. *The Reading Teacher* 40 (8), 749-754.

CE 076 310

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

ERIC®

REPRODUCTION RELEASE

(Specific Document)

I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:

Title: Mandating a construstivist approach to early elementary literacy instruction- the intendend and unintended consequences in one school district

Author(s): Klotylda Phillippi

Corporate Source:

Publication Date: April 15, 1998

II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, *Resources in Education* (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to the document.

If permission is granted to reproduce and disseminate the identified document, please CHECK ONE of the following three options and sign at the bottom of the page.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 1 documents	The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2A documents	The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2B documents
PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY Sample TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) 1	PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE, AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY, HAS BEEN GRANTED BY Sample TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) 2A	PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY Sample TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) 2B
Level 1 ↑ ☒	Level 2A ↑ ☐	Level 2B ↑ ☐
Check here for Level 1 release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche or other ERIC archival media (e.g., electronic) *and* paper copy.	Check here for Level 2A release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche and in electronic media for ERIC archival collection subscribers only	Check here for Level 2B release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche only

Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits.
If permission to reproduce is granted, but no box is checked, documents will be processed at Level 1.

I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce and disseminate this document as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche or electronic media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction by libraries and other service agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries.

Sign here,→ please

Signature: Klotylda Phillippi, Ph.D.

Printed Name/Position/Title: Klotylda Phillippi

Organization/Address:
42586 Cranbury Court
Canton, MI 48187

Telephone: 734/254-0360

FAX:

E-Mail Address: klophil@pilot.msu.edu

Date: 4/15/98

(over)

ERIC
Full Text Provided by ERIC